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THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. THOMAS COKE, LL.D.

INCLUDING IN DETAIL

HIS VARIOUS TRAVELS

AND

EXTRAORDINARY MISSIONARY EXERTIONS,

IN

ENGLAND, IRELAND, AMERICA, AND THE WEST INDIES:

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS DEATH.

MAY 3, 1814, WHILE ON A MISSIONARY VOYAGE TO THE ISLAND OF CEYLON, IN THE EAST INDIES.

INTERSPERSED WITH NUMEROUS REFLECTIONS;

AND CONCLUDING WITH

AN ABSTRACT OF HIS WRITINGS AND CHARACTER.

BY SAMUEL DREW,
OF ST. AUSTELL, CORNWALL.

So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him who walk'd the waves.

Milton's Lycidas.

New-York:
PUBLISHED BY LANE & TIPPETT,
FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.
JOSEPH LONGKING, PRINTER.
1847.

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DEDICATION.

TO ROBERT CARR BRACKENBURY, OF RAITHBY-HALL, LINCOLNSHIRE; THOMAS ROBERTS, KING-STREET, BATH; AND JOHN HOLLOWAY, CITY-ROAD, LONDON, ESQUIRES; EXECUTORS IN TRUST OF THE LATE REVEREND THOMAS COKE, LL.D.

Gentlemen,—I dedicate to you this volume, from a full persuasion that, as intimate friends of the late Rev. Dr. Coke, and guardians of his property, you must feel an interest in his reputation.

When our mutual but now deceased friend sailed for India, and consigned to your care the management of his temporal concerns, he committed to mine the delineation of his character. You were acquainted with this fact. And it has been to me no small source of consolation, while prosecuting the task of high responsibility which his unexpected death has now assigned me, to learn that his appointment of a biographer has received the sanction of your approbation. For my work, which is now presented through you to the world, I hesitate to entertain correspondent hopes.

If Dr. Coke had lived to reach the place of his ultimate destination, my undertaking would, in all probability, have been less arduous than it is at present. It was his intention to have furnished me with documents, facts, and incidents in chronological order; and to have transmitted them from India, that they might have been arranged for his inspection, in case he had lived to return, or for publication if he had visited Europe no more. This was a point which he kept in view while on his voyage, and his last letter to me, which was written off Madeira, chiefly turned on this topic.

But the overruling providence of God, which permitted this plan to be formed, has mysteriously interposed to prevent the execution of it. And, how paradoxical soever it may appear, the same awful stroke that has partially taken from me the means of fulfilling his wishes, has laid me under an additional obligation to comply with his request.

From the difficulties of this situation you have happily afforded me some relief, by giving me access to all his papers that were in your possession, and by readily answering such questions as I found it necessary to propose. Furnished with these materials, in addition to my own resources, I have endeavoured to draw the outline of a faithful picture, without introducing an exuberance

either of light or shade: in this state the work now approaches you; and I cheerfully consign it to your protection and care.

That the pages of my volume are free from error and imperfection, I have no more the presumption to suppose, than I have the vanity to imagine that their defects can escape your penetration. Your long and intimate acquaintance with the deceased must have deeply impressed upon your minds those varied features of his character, through which your judgments of him are formed and matured. This circumstance will preserve me from the imputation of flattery, although it may be at the expense of my labours.

It is to this maturity of judgment, however, that I the more readily appeal, from a full conviction that, because it is matured, it must be equally free from the influence of local prejudice and the delusion of visionary expectations. From you I have therefore a right to expect a decision that will blend accuracy with candour, without furnishing me with an occasion to complain of severity, or make me a debtor to compassion.

Should this work be so fortunate as thus favourably to pass the ordeal of your examination, my confidence in your ability and fidelity will shield me from illiberal criticisms which may arise from other quarters. Many may censure, and some may approve: but none can be more competent to form an accurate estimate of what I have written than yourselves.

There is, however, one department in which I expect you will find many rivals, and that is among Dr. Coke's numerous friends, who, like you, will be solicitous to cherish a strong affection for his name and memory. Yet even here I can scarcely suppose you will have any superiors, when I dare not make an exception even in favour of, gentlemen,

Your sincere friend and humble servant,

SAMUEL DREW.

St. Austell, May 17, 1817.

PREFACE.

In sending the following biographical sketch into the world, the writer of this volume has no design either to flatter the unreasonable admirers of the deceased, or to gratify his enemies. He has therefore not drawn an artificial picture; but he has followed him through life, and noticed the most distinguishing features in his character, without having an eye to either party, and without always adverting to the opinions which the facts he records might induce the reader to entertain.

Writing under these impressions, he is not conscious of having passed over in silence any material incident in Dr. Coke's life which could reasonably find a place in these memoirs, without descending to trifles which can have no necessary connection with a fair delineation of his character. On the same principle, he has neither emblazoned his virtues nor amplified his faults; and it is not improbable that, on this account, he has written in a manner that will give offence to all those whom nothing can please but panegyric or defamation.

> "The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
> To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,"

are feelings to which the author, on the present occasion, is a total stranger. He might have expatiated on a train of favourable coincidences, and have exalted accident into a virtue; or he might have given shades to infirmities which would have sprinkled them with the appearance of vice, without deviating from the rigid dictates of truth; but impartiality demanded from him a statement of naked facts, which should leave the judgment of the reader free from prepossession. To the candid and dispassionate, who are willing to make all reasonable allowances for the frailties of human nature, and who must estimate these allowances by the various situations in which the deceased was placed, such a faithful delineation as the author thus proposes cannot fail to afford satisfaction. But after all, the accomplishment of his purpose may fall short both of his wishes and hopes, and for this he must crave their indulgence.

That a man whose life has been spent in propagating Christianity—in carrying the light of the gospel among heathen nations—in cultivating and spreading the active and passive virtues which adorn social life—and finally, in directing sinners to the Saviour of the world, should find himself exposed to enemies,

mav seem exceedingly strange. But history and observation unite to inform us that this has been the lot of almost every public character. "Censure is a tax which every man must pay the public for being eminent;" and we well know that this fine has been constantly exacted from the greatest benefactors of mankind. Both Wesley and Whitefield were exposed to the charges of pride, ambition, and enthusiasm; and even Mr. Fletcher could not escape the tongue of slander.

To the shafts of unmerited censure, Dr. Coke was also exposed; and his name, as well as the names of his illustrious contemporaries and predecessors, was doomed to bear the base insinuations of invidious tongues. But reproachful epithets merit no reply. It was sufficient for Dr. Coke, by the sanctions of his own conscience, to know that his motives were pure in the sight of God; and, for his numerous friends on each side of the Atlantic, it must be pleasing to learn that he was beloved and revered in every country which had enjoyed the benefits of his labours. Of this fact the following respectable testimonies furnish the most indubitable evidence:—

"My Very Dear Friend, Dr. Coke,—When I consider the solemn offer you made of yourself to the general conference, and their free and deliberate acceptance of you as their episcopos, I must view you as most assuredly bound to this branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. You cannot, you dare not but consider yourself as a servant of the church, and a citizen of the continent of America. And although you may be called to Europe to fulfil some prior engagements, and wind up your temporal affairs, nothing ought to prevent your hasty return to the continent, to live and die in America. I shall look upon you as violating your most solemn obligations, if you delay your return. If you are a man of a large mind, you will give up a few islands for a vast continent not less than 1400 miles in length and 1,000 miles in breadth. We have sixteen United States for ingress and regress, rising, not like little settlements, but like large nations and kingdoms. I conclude, that I consider you are no longer a citizen of Wales or England, but of the United States of America. I am, with great respect,

"Your ever dear brother,

"Francis Asbury.

"*Charleston, February* 8, 1797.

"P. S. I give you this to remind you, lest you should forget what you have done, and what the general conference expects from you."

On the import and design of the preceding letter no comment can be necessary. It expresses in terms of imperious solicitude the wishes of Mr. Asbury and of the general conference, for Dr. Coke's return to the continent.

Nor can the early date of the preceding letter be justly urged against the continuance of the solicitude which it expresses. In the year 1800, the same sentiments were transmitted from the conference at Baltimore to that of this country, in reply to an ardent wish that the English conference had expressed for Dr. Coke's return to Europe. In this reply, which is inserted in the fourteenth

chapter of this volume, they only consented to *lend* Dr. Coke for a season, reserving to themselves the right of recalling him, as soon as they thought proper, in consequence of the promise which he had previously made to them.

In the year 1808, when the American preachers were about to recall him to the continent, a renewed address from the English conference was written, to request them to relinquish their claims; and it was only in compliance with this earnest solicitation that the conference in America were induced to suspend their demands. In their reply they say, "In compliance with your request, a vote has passed that he may continue with you until he may be called to us by all the annual conferences respectively, or the general conference. We are, however, not insensible of his value, not ungrateful for his past labours of love." This reply is inserted at large in the minutes of the English conference for the year 1809.

Neither do his friends appear to have been weary of him in Ireland; nor does their primitive attachment to him seem to have abated. In the year 1807, the language of the Irish conference respecting his return runs as follows:—"From the fulness of our hearts, dear fathers and brethren, we again repeat our request for the return of our greatly beloved and esteemed friend, Dr. Coke, to be president for the ensuing year. We are deeply conscious what a blessing he is to us, though we cannot fully tell how much we are indebted to him." And in the year 1809, they again say, "We thank you for sending, with such readiness, our old much beloved friend, the Rev. Dr. Coke, as our president, year after year; and with one accord we earnestly request that you will send him to preside among us the ensuing year."

Nor was the tone of their language less affectionate in the year 1813, only a few months before he bade adieu to Europe. Addressing the English conference, they say, "We need hardly assure you that we received the appointment of our dearly beloved brother and president, Dr. Coke, with the best affections of our hearts; and that his visit has been profitable and comfortable to our souls." The English conference, in reply to this address, express themselves in language which breathes the same spirit of affection:—"We have," say they, "a prospect of sending the word of life to the east. Our beloved brother Dr. Coke, burning with zeal for God, is about to visit that country, accompanied by seven missionaries, so that we hope pure Christianity, as taught by us from the beginning, will soon extend its influence through those populous and extensive regions."

Such is the language of the American, the Irish, and the English conferences, respecting this highly favoured servant of God.

To record in this preface the obligations which those who were intimately acquainted with Dr. Coke would have laid on the author, by communicating such incidents in his life as might tend to illustrate his character, would afford him much pleasure. But for these favours his acknowledgments must be confined within a narrow compass. To the friendly communications of Mr. John de Queteville, of Guernsey, he is indebted for the particulars of Dr. Coke's visit to Paris in the year 1791; and also to another gentleman for the account he has inserted respecting the Norman

Isles. To these favours he is not conscious of having received any addition. Benevolence has therefore fixed the boundaries of gratitude, and here both must terminate.

From the papers to which he has had access, through the kindness of Dr. Coke's executors, the author might easily have augmented the number of pages now presented to the public; but as these papers could only be interesting to the writers, being chiefly confined to local events, they contain nothing that could justify their insertion. From his own private papers, and from the letters, amounting to nearly two hundred, which he has in the handwriting of Dr. Coke, now in his possession, he might also have made numerous extracts. These would have furnished pleasing specimens of his easy, familiar, and perspicuous manner of expressing his thoughts in his epistolary correspondence: but to this collection he has omitted, except in two or three instances, to have any recourse, from a full conviction that the history of his life by no means requires a minute developement of his private concerns.

In his public actions, in his writings, and in the happy effects which have resulted from his missionary zeal, he still continues to speak, and to instruct his survivors, both by his example and his precepts. And the fruits of his active exertions, which continue to acquire magnitude and importance from the accumulation of years, promise to perpetuate his name, and to adorn it with unfading laurels when those periods shall have passed away in which men of no common renown shall be consigned to oblivion.

But these considerations, though of the first importance to the man who only aims at reputation in a region of "mortal immortality," are of a remote and secondary nature with the ministers of Jesus Christ. To them, the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of immortal souls, are their glory, and the crown of their rejoicing. Their characters are recorded in heaven, and their recompense will be at the resurrection of the just. By this principle, the writer of this volume sincerely believes that Dr. Coke was primarily actuated; and as they that are thus wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that "turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever," he must conclude that Dr. Coke will appear as an orb of superior magnitude and brilliancy in the regions of eternity.

THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. THOMAS COKE, LL. D.

CHAPTER I.

Design of biography—Birth, family, and early education of Dr. Coke—Divine providence, both general and particular, asserted—Removes to Oxford—Profligacy of the collegians—Becomes an infidel—Reflections on the influence of infidelity in colleges—General behaviour—Influence of conscience—Base conduct of a clergyman—Effects of reading Sherlock's Discourses, and Witherspoon on Regeneration—Chosen common councilman, and chief magistrate of Brecon—Deluded with promises of Church preferment—Graduates, and procures his diploma—First preaching—State of his mind, and tenderness of conscience.

The design of biography is to instruct the living by such a narrative of personal facts as will raise a monument to virtue, by embalming the memory of the dead. The character, therefore, which can be estimated as deservedly claiming this species of writing ought to appear, on a dispassionate review, to have been so conspicuous as to excite attentive admiration; to have been so beneficial as to demand a tribute of gratitude; and so excellent, when due allowances are made for human infirmities, as to be worthy of public imitation.

It is not always, however, that the purity of these principles can escape violation. The united influence of wealth and power will sometimes supplant the claims of justice, and fascinate the deluded world with splendid talents, though unadorned by virtue; ignobly demanding the trumpet of fame for a train of successful exploits that are tarnished with crimes of the deepest die. Hence it unfortunately and frequently happens, that

"What better far to oblivion were consign'd,
Is hung on high, to poison half mankind."

The statesman, the poet, the historian, the philosopher, and the divine have without doubt a claim upon public attention; and in proportion as an individual in any of those departments has promoted the welfare of mankind, we reflect with pleasure on his deeds; and, by cherishing the fond remembrance of his amiable virtues, transmit to posterity the lustre of his name, when his spirit has taken its flight to the regions of immortality, and his tongue is silent in the repositories of death.

Nor is it to characters of this description alone that biography should be confined. The arms of science encircle in their wide embrace the sons of genius, of utility, and of virtue in every form which diversity can assume; and the records of literature have preserved a list of names, to swell the catalogue of the common benefactors of the human race.

But no individual, in any condition of life, can ever hope to attain such an eminence as to claim universal regard. The pursuits of men are too various, and their habits of reflection too complicated, to justify such an expectation. Distinct characters shine in different spheres; but if conducted aright, every vocation in life is highly advantageous to the inhabitants of the world.

The statesman may inspire us with a love for our country; the poet may charm us with the magic of his numbers, and aid the cause of virtue by the decorations which he teaches her to wear; the historian may lead us back through departed ages, and introduce us to the manners of the mighty dead; and the philosopher may assist us in exploring the hidden recesses of nature, in leading us from visible effects to invisible causes, and he may finally conduct us to the primitive agent, that must necessarily be both infinite and eternal. These characters chiefly confine our views to the present state of existence; but the divine unfolds before us the interesting science of religion and morals; and, by the light of revelation, conducting us across that awful gulf which divides time from eternity, teaches us the important secret of making the felicities of both worlds our own.

"There is perhaps no species of writing more entertaining than that of biographical narrative; but its

utility must in no small degree depend upon the character of him who becomes the subject of historical relation. This must always form the criterion when the writer presents to the world a faithful delineation. An individual who has been renowned for probity and virtue may become an example to thousands, who may view him as a pattern worthy of imitation ; and his history may diffuse virtues through various walks of life, to which our calculations can never reach."*

Little did Dr. Coke think, when publishing the preceding paragraph, that these sentences would ever be transplanted into a biographical account of himself. But the fact serves to illustrate the principle which they contain, as well as to propagate the important and instructive lesson which they inculcate. And under the impression of this lesson the author now proceeds to delineate the history and character of this highly useful minister in the Church of God.

The Rev. Thomas Coke, LL. D., was born at Brecon, in South Wales, on the 9th of September, 1747; and was baptized on the 5th of the following month. His father's name was Bartholomew Coke. This gentleman was an eminent surgeon in Brecon. He was of high respectability, and several times filled the office of chief magistrate of the town, with much credit to himself and family, and with an equal degree of satisfaction to the public. His mother's name was Ann Phillips. This lady was the daughter of Thomas Phillips, Esq., and after him his grandson was called Thomas. Of the family of Coke there are some respectable branches still resident at Brecon, but they are not the descendants of Bartholomew.

Thomas being their only child, his affectionate parents watched over his infant days with more than common solicitude, and devised the most liberal plans for his education.

But before any of these schemes could be carried into execution, his father was summoned away by the call of death, so that the education of his darling child devolved on the widowed mother who survived her hus-

* Coke's Preface to the Life of Christ, p. 16.

band many years. Mrs. Coke lived to see his connection with the Rev. John Wesley; and after embracing and adorning by her piety the doctrines which he taught, died a member of the Methodist society in Bristol, in which city she had long resided.

Of his juvenile years and pursuits we have not much knowledge, as some of his papers which referred to his early days were taken with him to India, and it is to be feared that these are irrecoverably lost. After passing through the preparatory steps of education during his childhood, he was placed at a proper age under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Griffiths, master of the college school at Brecon, with whom he continued several years. Under the care of this gentleman he received the first rudiments of learning; and so well satisfied was he, as he advanced in life, of the obligations he was under to him, that he always remembered his name with gratitude, and spoke of him in terms of respectful approbation.

While these years passed by, his character was marked with the frivolities incident to youth. He was attached to the prevailing amusements, and was particularly fond of dancing. This attachment, toward the period of his removal from Brecon, exposed him to much company; and as he was peculiarly handsome, he became an object of admiration among the thoughtless and the gay, and was a singular favourite among his female associates, to whose charms his heart was by no means insensible.

He was not, however, even in these years of indiscretion, wholly destitute of the fear of God, nor ignorant of his superintending providence. To this he ascribed his preservation when exposed to danger in crossing a river; and from the apprehended effects of a sixpence which he once accidentally swallowed. A general providence seems to be commonly admitted, even by those who are disposed to object to that which is particular. These, however, must stand or fall together. He who superintends the whole, must necessarily superintend all the parts of which that whole is composed. Without this, we may suppose it possible for the whole to remain, while some of its parts may

be destroyed, which is an absurdity not less palpable, than to conceive that the body may remain unmutilated, although many of its essential parts are actually annihilated. Of this connection between a general and a particular providence, our young Tyro appeared sensible at an early age; however incompetent he might then have been to mark their diversity and relation with specific distinction and exactness.

At the age of sixteen he was removed from Brecon to Oxford; and in the Lent term of his seventeenth year was entered a gentleman commoner at Jesus College, in that university. On leaving the town of his nativity and the seat of comparative innocence and tranquillity, he soon found himself introduced to companions who bore little or no resemblance to those with whom he had been accustomed to associate. In this seminary of learning he soon discovered a licentiousness of manners to which he had hitherto been a stranger. And to complete his astonishment, and excite his detestation, he unhappily found that, instead of apologizing for the enormity of their conduct, some of his fellow students had contrived to discard with contempt those moral principles which he had been taught to consider as sacred, and to shelter themselves under the sorceries of argument, from the pangs of an upbraiding conscience. Between their practice and their principles he soon discovered a melancholy agreement. Infidelity had taken possession of their hearts, and its effects were fully unfolded in their lives.

Unfortunately, although he had been brought up in the general belief that revelation came from God, and that the doctrines which it taught, and the precepts which it inculcated, were calculated to make men wise unto salvation, his belief was of the hereditary kind; so that the arguments which proved revelation to be genuine, were totally neglected from an implicit conviction of its being true. On finding revelation assailed by sophisms which he had never heard before, and those principles attacked which he had never been instructed to defend, silence succeeded to astonishment at first; but the poison was working its way through unguarded avenues to his heart; so that by slow and im-

perceptible degrees he became a captive to those snares of infidelity which he had at first surveyed with detestation and horror. This unhappy circumstance formed a memorable epoch in his life. The impression which it made upon his memory was too deep to be effaced. In public and in private he has frequently taken occasion to introduce it, accompanied with terms of compassionate indignation against those who cherish the viper by which he was stung, and to reckon his deliverance from this dreadful hydra as a most singular interposition of the providence of God.

It must not, however, be supposed, because our young student found himself in the vortex of infidelity, that therefore all within the college walls were tainted with this mental pestilence. In both our universities many characters are always to be found whose principles and conduct are an honour to their profession. And to these sources of learning we stand indebted for some of the most splendid ornaments of our nation, of Europe, and of the world, both in science and divinity.

The principles of our young student, being thus tainted, soon communicated their fatal influence to his practice. But the restraints imposed by conscience still remained, and preserved him from those excesses into which he would in all probability have been otherwise hurried. The company into which, alas, he was thrown, sometimes led him to scenes of dissipation; and he was called to witness those deeds of darkness from which, even in moments of lawless riot, the moral feelings of his heart revolted. To these scenes of midnight abomination he has frequently turned his thoughts with indignant horror in his riper years; and has always accompanied the recollection with ascriptions of gratitude to God, for preserving him from participating in the vices which he beheld, even at a time when he more than half doubted the Divine existence. Such secret interpositions of Divine agency clearly manifest the superabounding grace of God, and place its efficacy in a light that is at once commanding and amiable.

But although he was thus preserved from the actual commission of the more abominable crimes, he fell an easy prey to the fashionable follies which reputed virtue

does not blush to own. To cards he was much inclined; and whist and quadrille were his favourite amusements. The bottle accompanied the diversion, and midnight occasionally concealed both under her sable mantle. But his success in gaming was never sufficient to induce him either to risk his own fortune, or to tempt him to think that he should ever acquire that of another from among his rival companions. To liquor, his attachment was never excessive. The love of companions in pleasure, the dread of being singular, and irresolution to resist temptation, were more powerful with him than any inherent inclination to deviate from the path of his primitive simplicity. And perhaps to these, and to similar causes, may be ascribed no inconsiderable share of those gayeties which, in the general estimation of the world, never cease to be amiable until they become excessive.

But amid this career of dissipation and folly, the happiness which he sought invariably eluded his grasp. No noise was sufficient to silence the voice of conscience; no torrent of excess could drown her secret whispers; and no amusement could either extinguish remorse, or compensate for that anguish which involuntary reflection always occasioned. Miserable in the midst of gay companions, and haunted by the apparition of disregarded virtue, his life was wretched without any visible calamity; and he sometimes sighed in solitude even while he partook of the stupifying opiates which his associates recommended by their pernicious example.

It was in this state of sorrowful indecision, having abandoned his old creed, without finding his new one to correspond with the dictates of his conscience, how much soever it might accord with the wishes he had cherished, that he paid a visit to a clergyman of Wales, whose name at that time had excited some degree of attention and respect. On the arrival of Sunday, this reverend gentleman, willing, in all probability, to please his Oxonian guest, selected a sermon, written in a masterly manner, on some of the most important doctrines of the Gospel. This he read with more than common animation; and appeared, by the manner in which he delivered it, to declare the sentiments of his heart.

Young Coke listened to the declaimer with all that attention and interest which the solemnity and importance of the occasion required; and felt his attachment to those principles which he had hitherto endeavoured in vain to forget, once more begin to revive in his bosom. The effects of infidelity now appeared in an inauspicious light; and serious suspicions were entertained by him of the validity of those arguments by which he had been proselyted to adopt his fashionable creed.

On returning from church, the visiter took occasion to express his opinion of the sermon which he had just heard, in terms of unqualified approbation. To this he added some hints on the state of his mind; and some remarks on the impression which the discourse had made; expecting, no doubt, to receive more ample information on those momentous subjects from a minister who had so ably advocated the cause of Christianity in the pulpit. But, strange as it may appear, this unhappy man, instead of endeavouring to remove the objections, which were only formidable to youth and inexperience, archly smiled at the simplicity of his young friend, and frankly told him that he did not believe any of the doctrines he had been defending!

Disgusted at the conduct he had witnessed, without being induced by the clergyman's example to think more favourably of infidelity, which could thus sanction perfidy, and cover an avowal of it with smiles of conscious superiority, he returned once more to Oxford, with a fixed resolution to take some decisive measures, that should finally confirm him in open infidelity, or bring him back to the principles of Christianity. This, in all probability, was one of the most momentous periods of his life; since, on the step he was about to take, without any visible guide or director to confirm or correct his judgment, depended, in no small degree, his destiny through life, and his happiness both in time and eternity.

It providentially happened that, just at this eventful crisis, the discourses and dissertations of Bishop Sherlock fell into his hands. These he read with more than common attention and interest; and being a sincere seeker after truth, God was pleased to accompany them

with his blessing. From this moment his mind decided in favour of Christianity, and all his deistical reasonings and objections disappeared. In this, also, he always found occasion to glorify the riches of Divine grace in secretly disposing him thus earnestly to search after truth, and in leading him to a treatise that should effectually cure the mental malady under which he had so long suffered.

The reasonings of Sherlock, however, only made him a Christian in theory. He was still a stranger to the religion of the heart, and knew nothing of the necessity of being born again. But an important point was gained; it had brought him within the precincts of revelation, and even laid him under an obligation to examine, with deep attention, the various doctrines of that system which he had thus embraced. The effect followed which might naturally be expected. From a treatise on regeneration, by Dr. Witherspoon, he obtained a considerable knowledge of the nature and the necessity of it; but it was not until some time afterward that he was put in actual possession of that genuine faith which unites the contrite soul to the Lord Jesus.

Having thus taken a decided part in favour of Christianity, he soon found occasion to leave his infidel companions, and with them the practice into which they had initiated him. His attention was now wholly engrossed by his studies; and his time was spent in the acquirement of such knowledge as he conceived to be necessary for that holy calling to which he now seriously turned his thoughts. On his former associates he looked with the sincerest pity; and on their practice with abhorrence. And, from that moment to the latest period of his life, he always spoke of his residence at Oxford with sorrow, and of the vices which were practised, and even sanctioned, among the dissolute students, in terms of detestation.

At the age of twenty-one, he was chosen common councilman for the borough of Brecon, which station his father had held when living; and, at the age of twenty-five, he was elected chief magistrate; which important office he filled with more than common reputation. The whole corporation were highly satisfied with

the rectitude of his conduct during the time that he presided among them; and the good order of the town was much promoted by his unwearied exertions to advance the public benefit.

As it was his full intention to enter into holy orders, the authority which his office gave him in Brecon, procured him many flattering prospects of rapid advancement in the Church. But preferment, through political interest, is a path in which disappointment frequently smiles at the simplicity of hope.

The member of parliament for Brecon, to express his gratitude for the assistance in his election received from the family of Coke, promised to the young candidate for holy orders something that might gratify his wishes; and taught him to expect a prebend in the cathedral of Worcester. By another gentleman still more exalted in rank, and therefore it was presumed of more influence and authority, his expectations were flattered with the same delusions. These contrived to keep alive his hopes through a series of years, and it was not till age and experience had taught him the folly of relying upon empty promises that he was awakened from that dream in which thousands have been entranced through life.

Deluded with the prospects of sudden elevation in the Church, the visionary phantom continued to dance before him till his serious impressions began to fade, and the necessity of being born of God assumed a less imperious aspect. To prepare himself for that shower of golden honours which he fully expected every moment to fall upon him, he hastened to obtain episcopal orders, that no impediment might obstruct his course, or intercept the bounty of his friends.

Several years had now elapsed since the first intimations had been given that brought on the ambitious delirium with which he was still enslaved. On this account he sought no regular employment, and made no permanent engagement. His hopes had indeed become less ardent through repeated disappointments; but this circumstance was not sufficient to induce him to abandon them. His fallacious friend having procured a seat in parliament, had rewarded him with promises which he

was now furnishing him with leisure to interpret. From his more noble friend he had even still less to expect than from the member; but "In folly's cup still laugh'd the bubble joy," till, being properly qualified, he took out his degree of Doctor of Civil Laws on the 17th of June, 1775.

During those intermediate years in which Dr. Coke, as we shall henceforth call him, waited upon earthly promises, he made no great proficiency in seeking the accomplishment of those that are heavenly. The world and its allurements nearly engrossed his whole soul; so that although he was a Christian by profession, he was destitute of experimental godliness; and preserving a moral demeanour he looked no farther. As to the impressions which the treatise of Dr. Witherspoon had made on his mind, they were refined into abstract truths, and as such he was satisfied to retain them. But the necessity of experiencing the love of God actually shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him, and bringing with it an internal evidence of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, he was content to leave for future consideration.

Convinced that the sanguine expectations which he had long cherished with inordinate fondness were likely to terminate in ultimate disappointment, Dr. Coke began seriously to think of forming some plan for life in which he might be useful to his fellow creatures. And although a stranger to vital religion, his aim was to preach the Gospel; for in no other department had he entertained any thought of exercising his talents. Beyond the pale of the Established Church he had neither inclination nor inducement to pass; and in the Church he could scarcely hope for any thing above a curacy, unless he should risk his fortune to give effect to promises which had hitherto fed both his vanity and his hopes. He might, indeed, have purchased a living, but to do this he felt much reluctance from the doubts he entertained whether such transactions were morally just. From the dictates of conscience he was never willing to deviate; and he was warned by this monitor to avoid making any approaches toward the conduct of Simon Magus, whose money was doomed to perish with him that offered it.

Few as the steps were which he had hitherto taken in life, we may perceive in them a tenderness in adhering to the admonitions of conscience even while his heart was unrenewed by Divine grace. Among his infidel companions he was never able to throw off its restraints; and by these means he was preserved from those excesses of vice into which he saw others plunge without remorse. At the time of his ordination he had many scruples which caused him to hesitate and waver in a state of indecision.

But these scruples did not arise from any doubts on the moral propriety of his ordination; but from a laudable apprehension lest he should solemnly undertake a task without being able to accomplish it, and thus involve himself in an awful responsibility that might imbitter his life and plant his dying pillow with thorns. The same principle prevailed, when ambition would have tempted him to purchase a living; and its influence finally deterred him from forming engagements, the duties of which those very scruples prove he was better qualified to perform than many who are totally strangers to consideration, hesitation, and remorse.

CHAPTER II.

Obtains a curacy at South Petherton—Builds a gallery—Becomes acquainted with Mr. Maxfield—Seriously affected by "Alleine's Alarm"—Reads his sermons—Becomes evangelical in his preaching—Church frequented by Dissenters—Interview with Mr. Hull—Becomes acquainted with an old Methodist—Preaches in some dwelling houses in his parish—Finds the pardoning love of God—Begins to preach extempore—Effects of this preaching—Persecution—Excluded from the pulpit—Chimed out of the church—Encouraged by Mr. Maxfield—Preaches twice near the church door—Finds an asylum in the family of Edmonds.

Dr. Coke, having now exhausted his patience in waiting on those proficients in artificial friendship "who squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow," began seriously to look around him for some respectable curacy that would promise to be permanent. It was not long before one of this description offered itself at South Petherton, in Somersetshire. This he readily embraced, as it afforded him an ample field for the exercise of his talents, of his zeal, and above all, of his earnest desire to be useful, which, from his earliest recollection, had always been predominant in his heart.

On his arrival at Petherton, though a stranger to vital godliness, he selected for the subjects of his discourses some of the most momentous truths of the Gospel; and delivering these with a degree of animation to which his auditors had not been accustomed, he soon attracted more than ordinary congregations. To enforce the doctrines which he taught in a manner best calculated to recommend them to his hearers, he endeavoured to form his sermons upon the best models of the age, that by the blessing of God, they might enlighten the understandings, affect the hearts and reform the lives of those who were committed to his care. And having a stronger confidence in the abilities of some celebrated divines than in his own talents, he frequently through diffidence introduced their compositions into his pulpit; especially when he found that the language in which they inculcated the doctrines which he was solicitous to teach, was more perspicuous than his own.

But amid these solicitudes, inquiries, and cares, which frequently engaged his midnight hours; instead of growing confident in his own attainments, every day furnished him with some new evidence of his ignorance. The prospects which opened before him appeared boundless; and in deep humility of soul, he saw the necessity of obtaining more light than he had hitherto acquired, upon many important truths; and of realizing the influence of Divine grace in his heart, more powerfully than he had hitherto experienced it. Prayer to God for Divine assistance now mingled with his private studies and his public ministrations. All his former, but long neglected impressions again returned; and he once more perceived, with unquestionable clearness, the necessity of being born of God.

The ardent desires of his heart soon became visible in his conversation, and in his preaching; and the report of his fervour and earnestness soon drew to his church the serious part of the neighbourhood; among whom were many who had already found that invaluable blessing which Dr. Coke was now evidently seeking. To the truths which he thus delivered in great sincerity, he added a degree of eloquence which frequently so affected his congregation, that many faces were suffused with tears. It was not long that his church could contain the vast numbers who assembled to hear. He therefore applied to the parish vestry for a gallery to be erected at the public expense. Caution, however, was more predominant than zeal, with those to whom he made his appeal; and the consequence was, that his application was refused. But this refusal was insufficient either to damp his ardour, or to make him relinquish an undertaking which he thought necessary in itself, and likely to be attended with the most beneficial consequences. He, therefore, without any farther consultation, employed tradesmen, and actually built a gallery at his own private expense.

By this unexampled effort and display of liberality, he gave to the astonished farmers of his parish such a proof of his sincerity and disinterestedness, that the more crafty ones began to suspect their new minister was somewhat tainted with Methodism. From these

sagacious discoverers it was whispered to others; and all watched him "with sly circumspection." At length the suspicions appearing strongly against him, the report became general; and, in a tone of expression that at once partook of indignity and jest, the parson, without farther ceremony, was pronounced guilty, and consequently loaded with the opprobrious appellation.

Happily, however, this report did not terminate either in indignity or jest; but it soon led to consequences which its propagators had not taken into their calculation.

Among the early lay preachers whom the Rev. Mr. Wesley had been instrumental in raising up, was Mr. Thomas Maxfield. This pious man was afterward ordained by the bishop of Londonderry, who resided some time at Bath for the benefit of his health. On receiving Mr. Maxfield, at Mr. Wesley's particular recommendation, the bishop used the following remarkable words: "Sir, I ordain you to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death." Some years after this circumstance, Mr. Maxfield quitted Mr. Wesley; and in the revolution of events, about the time of which we speak, he had taken up his abode not far from South Petherton, where Dr. Coke resided. This minister, on hearing the tale which popular report had circulated, began to entertain an opinion of the Petherton curate very different from that which had floated on the breeze of fame. And feeling a desire to render all the assistance in his power to an amiable young man, who improved all the light he had, and who was anxious to procure more, he sought his acquaintance, and was introduced as a pious friend. During the first interview, their conversation turned on the nature and necessity of conversion;—on experimental religion, as the genuine source of practical godliness;—and on the inward witness of the Spirit, which it is the privilege of all believers to enjoy. This conversation was of considerable service to the doctor, who was only yet able to "see men as trees walking." But from the repetition of these visits, his mind became gradually opened to see more clearly the things of God; many of his doubts were removed; and the whole plan of salvation by faith in the

merits of the Saviour, unfolded its beauties to his susceptible understanding and ravished heart, in a manner he had never seen before.

But it was not to the conversation of this pious clergyman alone, that Dr. Coke had to acknowledge his obligations. Nearly about the same time "Alleine's Alarm to the Unconverted" fell into his hands; and the forcible manner in which the author applies the language of Scripture, to confirm the salutary truths which his little book contains, riveted upon his heart the information he had received through the medium of conversation and of fervent prayer. "Sherlock's Discourses had produced a revolution in his opinions; but Alleine's Alarm now produced a revolution in his heart;" and from this time he became an earnest seeker of salvation until he experienced a clear manifestation of the love of God.

But although he was an earnest seeker of salvation, he had not embraced any particular system, nor even yet begun to inquire into the ultimate tendency of the various tenets which courted his approbation. His final decision in the choice of doctrines, and in favour of those taught by Mr. Wesley, was however soon effected by the following circumstance. Among the pious clergymen who occasionally visited the doctor, was the Rev. Mr. Brown, rector of Portishead, and vicar of Kingston, near Taunton. This gentleman, finding the state of indecision in which the doctor's mind at that time oscillated, put into his hands Mr. Fletcher's Appeal, and Checks to Antinomianism. These considerably assisted him in his religious progress, and were, as he has since declared, "the blessed means of bringing him among that despised people called Methodists, with whom," he adds, "God being my helper, I am determined to live and die."

It was nearly about the same time, that the Rev. Mr. Hull, a dissenting minister, who had been induced to hear the doctor preach, addressed to him a letter, which tended to encourage him in the good way. To this letter he replied; and after a correspondence of some continuance, and of no small degree of advantage to him, an interview was proposed by Mr. Hull. To this the

doctor had no personal objection, but so high were his prejudices in favour of the Establishment, that he choose rather to decline the friendly offer, than to contaminate himself by going to the house of a man who was an avowed dissenter; and the same prejudices prevented him from receiving Mr. Hull at Petherton. A compromise, however, took place, and they agreed to meet at a farm house, as a neutral spot, to which they might resort without polluting each other. In this interview the doctor soon discovered that his heart disowned the prejudices by which his head had been guided; and that it was possible for piety and knowledge to exist without the pale of the Established Church.

With a man labouring under prejudices so strong as those which at this time held Dr. Coke in captivity, few could be found more suitable to converse, than Mr. Hull. He had embraced the Cavinistic creed, but he was no bigot. Reasonable, communicative, and ingenuous, he was as willing to hear as to speak, and was more inclined to support his creed by argument than by dogma. This fact the following characteristic anecdote tends to illustrate.

One day it is said that he promised his congregation to preach on the ensuing Sunday from Acts x, 34, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons," and to point out the harmony which subsisted between this passage and the system of Calvin. When the day arrived, his congregation was unusually large, and expectation stood on tiptoe. He, however, had scarcely begun, before he discovered that he had roused a lion which he was unprepared to meet. But as his credit was at stake, he resolved to make a formidable effort, and he proceeded accordingly. He had not, however, advanced far, before he perceived such a discord between the system which he had undertaken to defend, and all the passages of Scripture which he could recollect, that after several ineffectual attempts he was obliged to desist,—to dismiss the congregation,—and to sit down overwhelmed with agitation and silent reflection. During the ensuing week he reviewed his creed with impartial scrutiny, and the result was, that he resolved, if God should spare him to see another Sabbath,

he would preach his love to all mankind. This resolution he is said to have carried into effect; and, to encourage him to perseverance, God was pleased to crown his labours with more abundant success.*

Among the happy effects which resulted to Dr. Coke from his conversation with Mr. Hull, the blow which had been given to his prejudices was not the least advantageous, since this prepared him to receive instruction from those who, in humble life, had experienced the pardoning love of God; of which an opportunity very shortly occurred.

It happened, while he was thus earnestly seeking the salvation of his own soul, and strongly recommending the Saviour of mankind to others, that he had an occasion to visit a respectable family in Devonshire. Among the labourers belonging to this family there was a poor man who had for some considerable time been a member of the Methodist society, and who superintended a small class. This man was soon found out by the doctor, who quickly entered into conversation with him on things which belong to our everlasting peace. The poor man, though destitute of worldly knowledge, had extensively explored the unfathomable mines of Divine love, and had large possessions of the unsearchable riches of Christ. On the nature of pardon—the evidence which accompanies it—the witness of the Spirit—the necessity of obtaining these inestimable blessings—and the manner in which we must come to God, they discoursed largely, and mutually opened their hearts to each other. From conversation they joined in prayer, and were so united in spirit that the doctor became solicitous to know something more concerning the Methodists, of whose doctrines and character he had heard many strange reports. To all his inquiries the old Christian gave him satisfactory replies, which induced him to think that he had been blinded by delusive representations, and he resolved to be the dupe of prejudice and imposition no longer. It was to the pious and communicative simplicity of this happy rustic, that Dr. Coke declared he owed greater obligations with respect

* See the History of the Wesleyan Methodists, p. 405.

to finding peace with God and internal tranquillity of soul than to any other person.

On returning to his parish, he soon discovered that the discourses which he had been accustomed to deliver were not altogether so evangelical as he could wish—that the necessity of pardon was not sufficiently enforced—that the evidence accompanying it was not satisfactorily explained—and above all, that a present salvation had not been so much insisted on as he now thought necessary. Under these impressions he proceeded to interline some of his discourses; to introduce paragraphs of an evangelical tendency, and to infuse that ardent spirit, by which he was actuated, into all his addresses from the pulpit. On these sincere endeavours of his servant God was pleased to command his blessing; so that he had the happiness of perceiving some fruit of his labour, even while he was destitute of that inward evidence of his adoption which he so successfully recommended to others.

But his pious exertions were not confined within the walls of his church. On taking a survey of his parish he found it very extensive; and although his church was crowded with hearers, he perceived with sorrow that great numbers among the aged and infirm were unable to attend. To prevent these from remaining destitute of the word of life, which he considered it his indispensable duty to hold forth to all, he appointed meetings on week-day evenings, at the houses of his friends, at which he delivered lectures to those whose presence he solicited. It was thus, like a faithful shepherd, he sought the infirm and wandering sheep of his flock, and visited even the highways and the hedges to compel sinners to turn to God. In this laborious manner he spent a considerable portion of his time, going about doing good, and finding in the faithful discharge of his duty the approbation of his own conscience, even without enjoying the assurance of faith.

Three years had now elapsed since he had taken upon him the charge of his parish, during which time his views had been gradually becoming more evangelical, his soul had experienced more Divine light, and the great plan of redemption had been unfolding to his

increasing faith. In the more early part of this period he walked in darkness; and in the latter, the glimmerings of twilight had not given place to the approaching day. The morning had indeed begun to dawn, but the Sun of righteousness had not yet arisen with healing in his wings. But the happy and long expected moment was near at hand.

One evening, as he walked into the country to preach to his little flock, his heart was in a particular manner lifted up to God in prayer for that blessing which he had sought so earnestly and so long. He did not then receive any immediate answer to his petition. But while he engaged in his public duty, and was unfolding the greatness of redeeming love, it pleased God to speak peace to his soul, to dispel all his fears, and to fill his heart with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Transported with the enjoyment of this blessing he returned home, glorifying the Author of all his mercies, and tenderly concerned for his fellow creatures, who were either seeking the same inestimable gem, or living without hope and without God in the world. He soon announced from the pulpit the blessing he had experienced; and his language partook of the fervour of his spirit. His manuscript became too feeble either to convey the rapid energy of his thoughts, or to contain the sacred fire which glowed in his breast. He had already, on peculiar seasons, ventured to make excursions beyond its confines; but from the lesson which experience had lately taught him, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, he found but little occasion for written discourses. His crutches were therefore thrown aside; and, under the teachings of the Holy Spirit, he began to walk boldly onward as a master of Israel. In this step also God was pleased to acknowledge his servant; a peculiar unction attended his word; and under his first extempore sermon three souls were awakened by his ministry.

But it was not to be expected that the idle, the thoughtless, the ignorant, the self-righteous, and the profane, throughout the extensive parish of South Petherton, would quietly suffer all these changes and innovations. In all ages, and in all places, the carnal mind

is enmity against God. This truth Dr. Coke was almost instantly called to witness. His preaching without a book,—the earnestness of his exhortations,—the plainness of his language,—and his establishing evening lectures in the villages, all conspired to give offence, and to create a general ferment in the parish and neighbourhood. The clergymen in his vicinity were displeased at his violation of accustomed order, and because his preaching drew away many of their regular hearers. The genteel part of his own parish were offended at his uncommon zeal; the profane at his severe reproof of sin; and the moral at his enforcing the necessity of an experimental acquaintance with God. Above all, as he had introdnced the singing of hymns into the church, the singers were much disgusted, and all parties joined in the general clamour.

To put an end, if possible, to these wild irregularities, as they were thought, a charge was made out against him, and presented to Bishop Ross; but this did not produce the effect that was expected. The purport of his reply was that the utmost he could do would be to suspend him from his ministerial functions for three months; and that if this were done it would produce a clamour on the opposite side, particularly among those who were inclined to favour Methodism; and furnish them with a fair pretence for saying that he had been persecuted for righteousness' sake. And, perhaps, he was not without his fears that the doctor, if suspended, would quit the Church for ever, in which such active zeal was so much wanted, and join himself to the Methodists, whose rising power and accumulating numbers he viewed with a jealous eye. This was the only redress they could obtain from Bishop Ross, who thought it best to let the affair remain in silence, for to Dr. Coke he said nothing.

The cause was, however, somewhat different with the bishop of Bath and Wells, for to his ears the fame of the doctor's preaching had also reached. But his measures were rather admonitory than authoritative. A letter was sent to the doctor from him, to which a reply was given immediately; but as nothing more was heard from this quarter, the fair presumption is, either that

the bishop was satisfied with his conduct, or that he viewed him as incorrigible, and prudently ceased to admonish, as soon as he perceived there was no hope of reformation.

But these disappointments were not sufficient to damp the ardour of opposition. The refusal of the bishops to interfere, induced the doctor's enemies to apply to the rector of the parish; who, to gratify their wishes, became one of the party, and promised to dismiss his curate, who had rendered himself obnoxious, in proportion as he was become faithful and earnest in seeking the salvation of souls. The scheme was soon concerted; and on an appointed day, without giving the doctor any opportunity of delivering his own soul in a farewell address to his congregation, he was abruptly dismissed, on a Sunday, before the people, from that church where he had preached upward of three years. And, in the estimation of his enemies, to complete his disgrace, to gratify their vengeance, and consummate their triumph, they actually caused the parish bells to chime him out of the doors.

Being thus dismissed with honourable infamy, the doctor's friends gathered around him to administer consolation, and to cheer his drooping spirit. The disgrace attending his expulsion created little uneasiness; but he felt severely from the precipitancy of the measures that had not allowed him time to preach a farewell sermon to a people whom he never expected to address again. His friends perceived his distress; and on learning the genuine cause from whence it sprang, recommended an expedient which was soon adopted.

As the removal of the doctor from his curacy, though sudden and unexpected to him, was the result of deliberate calculation among his enemies, another curate had been provided to supply his place. This gentleman, who stepped immediately into the vacant pulpit, perfectly understood the part he was to act. He accordingly introduced himself to the notice of his congregation by preaching against the doctor, and by attempting to counteract those heresies which he had of late propagated. This fact the doctor has recorded in his concise memoranda; but to his honour it ought to be mentioned

that charity has left a blank where resentment would have inserted his opponent's name.

Harassed in his mind with his uncomfortable situation, and traduced, both in public and in private, by men who could only vindicate their own conduct by vilifying his, he resolved, if possible, to deliver a farewell address to the people, before he quitted the parish for ever. And he was incited to do this by the encouragement of several friends, but more particularly so by Mr. Maxfield, whose name has been already mentioned, and who never forsook him during all his vicissitudes in Petherton.

Banished from the citadel of consecration, it was resolved that, on the two ensuing Sundays, he should stand near the church, and begin to preach just as the people left it, since he could no longer address them from the pulpit within. This was, perhaps, the only expedient, under present circumstances, which he could possibly adopt, to vindicate his character; to satisfy the dictates of his conscience; and to gratify the earnest wishes of his sincere adherents.

When the day arrived, he took his stand and began his discourse, and found himself surrounded by a promiscuous crowd of enemies and friends. There is a something in the exercise of arbitrary power that awakens the revolting principles of human nature, and stimulates to resistance. It was plain to all, that the doctor had been crushed by an act of local authority, which, without appealing to justice, had sheltered itself under the sanction of law. Many, therefore, who disapproved of his preaching, viewed him now as an object of oppression, and espoused his cause more, perhaps, from enmity to his oppressors, than from any real attachment to him; and several among them determined to defend the injured man, whom they thought they had a right to ridicule, and even to traduce, on other occasions.

Thus circumstanced, between the jarring opinions of his avowed enemies,—of many who had taken no decided part,—of his transient supporters,—and of his permanent friends, the doctor proceeded, and was permitted to conclude his first sermon in peace. His enemies, however, on finding that he intended preaching

again, on the ensuing Sunday, became quite exasperated; and, without any hesitation, threatened to stone him, in case he made his second appearance. But he was neither to be frightened nor deterred, though many of his friends began to think seriously of the consequences that might ensue, if he persisted; especially as hostile preparations were actually making, in the face of open day. The doctor alone appeared without solicitude; and his tranquillity arose from a full conviction that he was under the immediate inspection and care of an omniscient and omnipresent Being, in whom he had learned to put his trust.

There resided, at this time, not far from Petherton, an amiable family of dissenters, named Edmonds. This family, which was of no small respectability, consisted of the gentleman and his lady, and a son and daughter, both grown to maturity. The son and daughter, though bred up as dissenters, on hearing the report of the doctor's preaching, in times past, had determined to attend the church. This they did; and conceiving an attachment for him, they became his regular hearers. On the morning of the second Sunday after his expulsion, when the parents proceeded to their own meeting house, they cautioned their children against going to the church on that day; well knowing the plans that had been concerted, and their strong attachment to the doctor. Prudence, therefore, directed them to give these admonitions, from an apprehension that their children might be involved in troubles, which they could neither remedy nor prevent.

Scarcely, however, had the cautious parents left their home, before their courageous son and daughter began to reflect on the perilous situation of their friend; and, thinking it mean to desert him in time of need, their affection prevailed over parental admonitions; they therefore took their horses, and rode immediately to Petherton. Among the preparations that were made to annoy the congregation, and to drive the doctor from the field, a large quantity of stones had been collected and placed in some hampers, near the spot on which he was expected to stand. But these hostile appearances were insufficient to divert the Edmondses from their

purpose. They accordingly placed themselves, when the doctor began, one on the right hand and the other on the left, to wait the impending event. To these were joined a great number of other real friends, who had rallied around him in this moment of danger; and with these, associated the enemies of persecution, so that only an inconsiderable party was found to patronize the hampers, and discharge their contents; and these were from the common rabble, which every town and parish can produce.

Why men, whose deeds are evil, should prefer darkness to light, requires no great degree of penetration to discover. It was now open daylight; and the persons of all were well known to many, who, from the countenance which, by their present attitude, they seemed to give the doctor, tacitly declared that they intended to espouse his cause against every attempt of illegal violence. Under these circumstances, it became a matter of prudent calculation with every one, to avoid casting the first stone. The event was, that the doctor proceeded in his discourse, and finally concluded, before the *hampered* proselytes could resolve how to carry their premeditated threats and designs into execution. The service thus concluding without any act of hostility, the young Edmondses took the doctor with them to their habitation, where he was kindly received by the parents; and from this period he always made this house his home during all his future visits to Petherton.

Being now dismissed from his curacy, and having taken an affectionate leave of the congregation, it became a subject of serious consideration with Dr. Coke, to know what course he should take in passing through life. As to Church preferment, his hopes were far from being sanguine, although, even to the present hour, the promises of his friends had been calculated to keep alive his expectations. To another curacy he could without much difficulty have access. But from what he had already experienced, he had reason to fear that his way would be strewed with briers; and that the general usefulness at which he aimed, would be prevented by obstacles which it would be useless to encounter, while they were sanctioned by superiors, who were more dis-

posed to countenance a mob, than to support him against their outrages.

Placed in circumstances of comparative affluence, he was under no necessity of seeking employment for bread. He therefore resolved to pause for a season, till those clouds should dissipate, which, at present, gathered around him, on every side, and completely shut the avenues of reasonable hope. An inward sense of the Divine favour, a consciousness of his own rectitude of intention, and the consolations of a few friends, were his only solace. Hence in the midst of darkness he was enabled to confide in God, although he could form no conception of those approaching dispensations which have conspired to render his name immortal.

CHAPTER III.

First interview with Mr. Wesley at Taunton—Joins the Methodists—Appointed to London—Popular among the people—Visits the societies—Contends with difficulties—Bears an active part in procuring the deed of declaration—Testimony of Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke respecting the deed of declaration—Presides in the first Irish conference—Testimonies of approbation in favour of Dr. Coke—State of religion in Ireland.

It has sometimes been observed in the natural world, that excessive darkness is but a prelude to approaching day; and in the moral world we frequently discover in the economy of God, that "behind a frowning providence he hides a smiling face." Dr. Coke had thus far experienced the darkness and the frown, but these were to be succeeded by daylight and smiles.

While affairs were in a state of agitation at Petherton, he had accidentally learned that Mr. Wesley was to preach at Taunton on a given day, and was to sleep the ensuing night at the house of the Rev. Mr. Brown, in Kingston. As this was the gentleman from whom Dr. Coke had received the works of Mr. Fletcher, an intimacy had taken place between them. The doctor, therefore, thought this a favourable opportunity for an

interview with Mr. Wesley, from whose conversation he hoped to reap much spiritual advantage. He accordingly took his horse, and rode that day to Kingston, that he might enjoy the company of this venerable servant of Jesus Christ in the evening, after he returned from preaching at Taunton.

He would not, however, presume to hear Mr. Wesley preach in any place beside the church, although he had travelled twenty miles to enjoy his company and conversation. Nothing at this time could be more repugnant to his feelings and judgment, than the thoughts of separating from the Establishment, within the pale of which he had resolved to live and die. Of his conversation with Mr. Wesley and Mr. Brown we have no memorial. But from the manner in which Mr. Wesley has recorded the interview, we may be fully satisfied it was highly pleasing to both parties.

"I preached," says Mr. Wesley, in his journal of August 18, 1776, "at Taunton, and afterward went with Mr. Brown to Kingston. Here I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late a gentleman commoner of Jesus college, in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me: I had much conversation with him, and a union then began which I trust shall never end." This appears to have been their first interview; and although the language might not have been prophetic, the event proved perfectly consonant to his expectations in time, and who can doubt that it has been renewed with increasing ardour since they have met in the world of spirits!

But this union of spirit was not yet matured to a unity of action. However, as Mr. Wesley, during this interview, unfolded to him his plans, and communicated his designs, he was furnished with an opportunity of reflecting upon what he had heard, and of deliberately sitting down to count the cost, if he had any latent intention of finally joining him in the work in which he was engaged.

At what particular time Dr. Coke was dismissed from his curacy is rather uncertain; but this uncertainty is confined within a very narrow compass. And consequently, as his removal from Petherton finally deter-

mined him to join Mr. Wesley, the event of this union is involved in the same degree of uncertainty. It is plain, however, that this removal, and this union, must have taken place between August, 1776, and August, 1777, since in the former date we behold their first interview, and in the latter we perceive that union formed which had been virtually anticipated.

Mr. Wesley, in his journal of the 19th of August, 1777, wrote as follows: "I went forward to Taunton with Dr. Coke, who, being dismissed from his curacy, has bidden adieu to his honourable name, and is determined to cast in his lot with us." The Methodist conference was this year held in Bristol, and Dr. Coke attended; but for some reasons which are not known, his name made no appearance in the minutes until the ensuing year, when he was appointed to labour in London.

If conjecture may be permitted to supply the place of evidence in this instance, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that Mr. Wesley, highly pleased with the acquisition of a pious, active clergyman, might have chosen to take him in his own company, while he paid a visit to the societies, in order to furnish him with an opportunity of making his observations—to introduce him to the people—and to confirm him in those principles which he had already embraced, as well as accustom him to that discipline which he had thus far established. As the doctor had many friends in exalted stations who had continued almost to the very last to flatter his hopes, Mr. Wesley, who was well acquainted with human nature, might not be without his fears that something very tempting might be held out to recall him, when the step he had taken came to be fully known. Prudence might therefore have conspired to keep him immediately under his own eye, till the day of temptation was past, and his former friends had placed him among the incorrigibles.

We are warranted in drawing these conclusions from the conduct of Lord ——, who had for some considerable time honoured the doctor with his friendship and professed patronage. And not many months before he was dismissed from his curacy, and had joined Mr. Wesley, his lordship sent him a letter in his own handwriting,

renewing his promise that he would recommend him to his majesty for some preferment at the disposal of the crown. Nothing, however, was either done or promised after he had taken his decisive step. And perhaps his noble patron was not displeased to find that ultimate disappointment had been so nicely concealed in the garb of promise, as to escape detection under so favourable a pretext.

The doctor, having advanced so far as to be above the desire and beyond the opportunity of retracting with any hope of preferment, entered on his new vocation with that zeal and energy which invariably distinguished all his actions. To Mr. Wesley's advice and direction he was ever ready to submit; and he was generally employed on those occasions where clerical assistance was thought to be expedient; for to this order our late venerable father still retained an invincible attachment.

The report of Dr. Coke's conversion,—of his energetic manner of preaching,—of his ill treatment at South Petherton,—of his being dismissed from his curacy,—and of his having joined Mr. Wesley, was soon circulated throughout the Methodist connection. It had reached London long before his appointment for the metropolis, and had excited strong prepossessions in his favour. His congregations were therefore exceedingly large, and frequently the houses were insufficient to contain the people. This induced him to preach abroad whenever the weather permitted, and the congregation rendered it necessary; and God was pleased on these occasions to add many seals to his ministry. The ground on which Tavistock-square now stands, was at that time laid out in fields. In these he frequently collected large assemblies, and much good was there done through his instrumentality.

Nor was this popularity of a transient nature. His earnestness, his activity, his piety, his zeal for God, and, above all, his unconquerable desire to do good, which was always evinced by his warm addresses to the hearts of his hearers, ensured him a cordial reception on all occasions, even when more splendid talents and more commanding eloquence were compelled to plead in vain. To this ascendency in the affections of the people, the

harmony of his voice, the engaging smile which his countenance displayed, and the clerical character which he sustained, no doubt, in part contributed. But these inferior circumstances must be allowed to dwindle into their own insignificance when compared with that peculiar unction with which God was pleased to attend his word.

Dr. Coke, having made himself fully acquainted with the doctrines, discipline, and rules of the Methodists, through his intimacy with Mr. Wesley, and his daily observations, was appointed, in the year 1780, to superintend the affairs of the London circuit. Nothing, however, of particular moment occurred while he held this office. His zeal, his activity, his usefulness, and his popularity continued without diminution. He was considered by the people as an invaluable acquisition to the cause of Methodism; and Mr. Wesley's confidence in him, which was nearly unbounded, was most judiciously placed with regard to the execution of his plans.

His faithfulness, however, in fully discharging what he conceived to be his duty, under the direction of Mr. Wesley, was not always without its difficulties; nor was his situation, at all times, of the most comfortable nature. But to all these inconveniences he had resolved to submit, from a full conviction that he was in the path of duty, and that trials and sufferings are the lot of all who will live godly in Christ Jesus.

During many years, before Dr. Coke joined him, it had been an established custom with Mr. Wesley to visit the societies which God had made him instrumental in raising up, so often as his other avocations would allow. But so much had these societies increased in number, both in England and Ireland, about the year 1780, that to many his personal visits had been restricted to every second year. On the acquisition of Dr. Coke, Mr. Wesley, however, determined that in Ireland he should visit the societies alternately with himself, thus making between them in that kingdom an annual visit; and in England, that he should take such journeys as prudence might direct, and circumstances allow. Dr. Coke accordingly entered on this arduous work about the year 1780, and, under various modifications, con-

tinued travelling almost incessantly either by land or water, until death put a period to his mortal career.

Among the members of the societies he was generally received as an inhabitant of the celestial regions, who, out of compassion to common mortals, had condescended to visit the abodes of men. His manner of preaching always left a favourable impression on the minds of the people at large; his word was frequently attended with the Divine blessing; and the regret they felt at parting with him was equal to the joy they manifested on his arrival. As a clergyman of the Church, he frequently found the doors of the Establishment open for his reception; and his character and dress procured for him a number of friends, who commanded respect in many places, where, without a gown or cassock, a preacher of the Gospel durst not appear with safety.

In the course of these journeyings, it came to the doctor's lot to revisit South Petherton, the place of his former residence, from the church of which he had been dismissed. But time had wrought a considerable change in the dispositions of the people, and procured for him a reception which an able writer, animadverting on the consequences of his removal, thus describes:—

"Meanwhile the doctor's opponents had no great comfort of their triumph. The worth of certain characters is not appreciated till we feel their loss. In walking the street, they everywhere met a mournful countenance. The poor had lost their benefactor, the people their pastor, the sick their comforter, and the wicked the only person that kept them in awe. But on the doctor's future visit, sober reason having regained the sovereignty, these same opponents were the foremost to chastise their own folly. 'Well,' said they, 'we *chimed* him out, and now we will atone for our error, by *ringing* him in.' Such are the issues of bearing adversity with a becoming temper of mind."*

As the doctor, in his occasional visits, sometimes acted as Mr. Wesley's more immediate representative, it was not unfrequently his lot to introduce regulations into the societies with which many were dissatisfied.

* History of the Wesleyan Methodists, p. 410.

His power was rather discretionary than precisely definite: and, in several instances, he has been accused of proceeding beyond the bounds of delegated authority. How far such a charge may be considered as just, it is impossible to say. The warmth and energy of his natural disposition, his eagerness to accomplish his purposes, and his promptitude of action, will tend to sanction the accusation. But it is well known when projected schemes miscarry, that the views of men undergo a considerable alteration, and those efforts are frequently rewarded with censure for which success would have insured applause. With difficulties of this nature the doctor was sometimes compelled to contend; while the part which he actually bore in the dubious transactions rendered his means of defence more perplexing than the charges were serious which he undertook to obviate; and this ultimately exposed his conduct to suspicions which it was not easy for him to repel. An affair of this kind occurred much about this time respecting the settlement of the Methodist chapels.

It is well known that the itinerant plan of preaching has always been considered as a fundamental principle in the economy of Methodism. It has been owned and blessed of God in a most remarkable manner. Originating with Christ and his apostles, it has been proved to be the most efficacious means for propagating the Gospel that, under God, have ever blessed the world from the commencement of the Christian era to the present hour. To preserve this plan from violation, it is obvious that the stationing of the preachers must ultimately rest with the preachers themselves. For if the people have a right to dictate or appoint, all will choose men of superior talents; all will reject those of weak ones: contending parties will instantly be formed, and the whole connection will degenerate into factions. But if, to preserve the itinerant plan, the appointment of the preachers must rest with the conference, the security of the pulpits throughout the kingdom must be necessary, to give that plan and this appointment their proper effect.

In providing for these consequences, two difficulties of considerable magnitude occurred to Mr. Wesley; one

was in annexing some definite idea to the term conference; and the other was, how to secure the use of the pulpits, without including in that security the property of the chapels. To compass these points, Mr. Wesley made what is generally called "The Deed of Declaration," which he caused to be enrolled in chancery. In this deed he made provision for the settlement of the chapels in his connection, and restricted the term conference to *one hundred of the preachers*, who were specified by name; pointing out, at the same time, how those deficiencies should be supplied which might be occasioned by death, or by other causes. This Deed of Declaration may be seen at large in Dr. Whitehead's Life of Mr. Wesley, vol. ii, p. 384, Dublin edition. It is dated Feb. 28, 1784.

The publication of this deed created a transient stir throughout the connection; particularly among a few of those preachers who were not included in the hundred that were expressly named. And what added to the momentary uneasiness was, that some who were omitted had been of long standing, and were of considerable influence, while others who were included, had little or nothing to recommend them that could be discovered by such as complained because they were not mentioned. As the name of Dr. Coke was included in the *hundred*, the charge of limiting the number fell chiefly on him; and as he was known to have taken an active part in the business, the imputation seemed to be founded on something more than mere suspicion. Those, therefore, who conceived themselves to be slighted by the omission of their names, could easily perceive artifice and design in his conduct, and even discover his latent intention to assume over them an unauthorized degree of dominion immediately after Mr Wesley's decease; and these steps were thought to be preparatory to the measure.

But how loud soever the clamour raised against him might have been on this account, and by how many voices soever it might have been echoed, it does not appear that the charge was ever supported by any real evidence, either directly or indirectly. On his conduct on this occasion the joint testimony of Mr. Wesley and

himself positively declares the contrary, in language too unequivocal to be misunderstood.

"My first thought," says Mr. Wesley, "was to name a few, suppose ten or twelve persons. Count Zinzendorff named only six who were to preside over the community of Moravians after his decease. But, on second thoughts, I believed there would be more safety in a greater number of counsellors, and therefore named a hundred, as many as I judged could meet without too great an expense, and without leaving any circuit naked of preachers while the conference was assembled.

"In naming these preachers, as *I had no adviser*, so I had no respect of persons; but I simply set down those that, according to the best of my judgment, were most proper. But I am not infallible. I might mistake, and think better of some of them than they deserved. However, I did my best, and if I did wrong, it was not the error of my will, but of my judgment.

"But what need was there for any deed at all? There was the utmost need of it. Without some authentic deed, fixing the meaning of the term, the moment I died, the conference had been nothing. Therefore any of the proprietors of land, on which our preaching houses were built, might have seized them for their own use; and there would have been none to hinder them, for the conference would have been nobody, a mere empty name.

"You see, then, in all the pains I have taken about this absolutely necessary Deed I have been labouring not for myself, (for I have no interest therein,) but for the whole body of the Methodists, in order to fix them on such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure: that is, if they continue to walk by faith, and to show forth their faith by their works: otherwise I pray God to root out the memorial of them from the earth. JOHN WESLEY."*

Of the part which Dr. Coke bore in the procuring and completing of the Deed of Declaration, he gives the following account, in "An Address to the Methodist

* Coke's and Moore's Life of Wesley, p. 356.

Society in Great Britain and Ireland on the settlement of the preaching houses."

"My Dearest Brethren,—It has long been the grief of my mind, that any thing should exist among us which gives uneasiness to many of you, and will, if it be suffered to continue among us, be a ground for perpetual dissatisfaction, to the great hinderance of the work of God; I mean the power given to the conference by the present mode of settling our preaching houses.

"I have opened my sorrowful mind at large to several of the most judicious of our preachers; men who have borne the heat and burden of the day, men of renown in our Israel, and they have, with one voice, advised me to lay before you the present plan of reconciliation. For this purpose I shall in the first place relate to you the several steps by which the Deed, which was enrolled in chancery by our dear honoured father in the Gospel, Mr. Wesley, was set on foot, and afterward completed.

"In the conference held in the year 1782, several complaints were made, in respect to the danger in which we were situated, from the want of specifying, in distinct and legal terms, what was meant by the term, 'The conference of the people called Methodists.' Indeed, the preachers seemed universally alarmed, and many expressed their fears that divisions would take place among us after the death of Mr. Wesley on this account; and the whole body of preachers present seemed to wish that some methods might be taken to remove this danger, which appeared to be pregnant with evils of the first magnitude.

"In consequence of this (the subject lying heavy on my heart) I desired Mr. Clulow, of Chancery-lane, London, to draw up such a case as I judged sufficient for the purpose, and then to present it to that very eminent counsellor, Mr. Maddox, for his opinion. This was accordingly done, and Mr. Maddox informed us, in his answer, that the deeds of our preaching houses were in the situation we dreaded; that the law would not recognize the conference in the state in which it stood at that time, and, consequently, that there was no central

point which might preserve the connection from splitting into a thousand pieces after the death of Mr. Wesley. To prevent this, he observed that Mr. Wesley should enrol a deed in chancery, which deed should specify the persons by name who composed the conference, together with the mode of succession for its perpetuity; and at the same time such regulations be established by the deed as Mr. Wesley would wish the conference should be governed by after his death.

"This opinion of Mr. Maddox I read in the conference held in the year 1783. The whole conference seemed grateful to me for procuring the opinion, and expressed their wishes that such a deed might be drawn up and executed by Mr. Wesley as should agree with the advice of that great lawyer, as soon as possible.

"Soon after the conference was ended, Mr. Wesley authorized me to draw up, with the assistance of Mr. Clulow, all the leading parts of a deed which should answer the above mentioned purposes. This we did with much care, and as to myself I can truly say with fear and trembling, receiving Mr. Maddox's advice in respect to every step we took, and laying the whole ultimately at Mr. Wesley's feet for his approbation; there remained now nothing but to insert the names of those who were to constitute the conference. Mr. Wesley then declared that he would limit the number to one hundred. This was indeed contrary to my very humble opinion, which was, that every preacher, in full connection, should be a member of the conference; and that admission into full connection should be looked upon as admission into membership with the conference; and I still believe it will be most for the glory of God, and the peace of our Zion, that the members of the conference admit the other preachers who are in full connection, and are present at the conference from time to time, to a full vote on all occasions. However, of course, I submitted to the superior judgment and authority of Mr. Wesley. But I do publicly avow that I was not concerned in the limitation of the number, or the selection of the hundred preachers who were nominated the members of the conference.

"All things necessary being completed in the court

of chancery according to law, I thought it my duty to send copies of the Deed to all assistants of circuits throughout Great Britain; and I afterward carried copies of it to Ireland."

However full and explicit these declarations are, both from Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke, they were insufficient at that time to silence the clamour that discontent had raised, or to stay the ferment which the Deed of Declaration occasioned. Mr. Wesley had as positively declared that in naming the hundred he had no adviser, and was not actuated by any respect of persons, as Dr. Coke had, that the limitation to this number was contrary to his judgment, and that he had no concern whatever either in the restriction or the nomination. But the irritation which these measures occasioned, has long since subsided; and the dangers which were anticipated have been found to be the phantoms of imagination. The Deed of Declaration is now uniformly acknowledged as a blessing to the connection, of which the happy consequences will probably be felt by generations yet unborn. The part, therefore, which Dr. Coke took in procuring it has already obtained for him the approbation of the present age, and we cannot doubt that it will ensure the gratitude of posterity.

But how much soever Dr. Coke might have been buffeted by these conflicting storms, he continued gradually to rise in the estimation of Mr. Wesley, and in that of most others who placed confidence in his judgment. Of this fact his subsequent appointments to fill the most arduous situations which the connection at that time afforded, bear the most unquestionable testimony. And the manner in which he acquitted himself in the discharge of his duties may be gathered from the glorious effects which have resulted from his exertions; and from that respect and veneration with which his name is remembered by the pious in the sister kingdom, and in all other places which have witnessed his extensive labours.

In the year 1782 he was directed by Mr. Wesley to convene together the Irish preachers, and to hold, for the first time, a conference in Dublin, upon the same principles that the conferences in England had been

conducted. Methodism, prior to this time, had obtained a considerable footing in Ireland, notwithstanding the rage of persecution which the advocates of the Gospel had been compelled to endure. Both Mr. Wesley and his brother had visited this country; and an account of the treatment they received from mobs, instigated and supported by men in authority, may be seen at large in the Life of Mr. Wesley by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, and also in that of Dr. Whitehead. During these visits Mr. John Wesley had collected together several of the Irish preachers, and had consulted with them on the religious affairs of Ireland; but these occasional conventions had never yet assumed the form of conferences. All the concerns of Ireland, that were deemed of importance, had been transacted in England, where the appointment of all the preachers throughout the connection took place. But from the increase of the societies, and the accumulation of business, a separate conference was found necessary; and in the year 1782 Dr. Coke for the first time presided in that assembly, which has been continued annually ever since.

On his first official visit to Ireland, though unacquainted in a great degree with the habits and prevailing propensities of the people, he soon discovered great improprieties, that had principally sprung up through neglect of discipline. Against these he delivered his testimony in pointed language, and thus gave to the preachers and people a fair specimen of what they might expect, so long as he had the honour of presiding in their conferences. But this faithfulness in the discharge of his duty presented no obstacle to his subsequent appointments. He was an avowed enemy to sin, and his friends were actuated by the same principle.

As the Irish were so well satisfied with his conduct, as president of their conference, that they were anxious for his reappointment, he took occasion, in several succeeding years, to travel over as many circuits as time would permit him to visit, in order to make himself fully acquainted with the state of religion throughout the kingdom. This previous knowledge, thus acquired, enabled him to fill his station in the ensuing assembly with more confidence in himself, and with an increasing

approbation from the people. And from this year, 1782, until he prepared to visit India, Dr. Coke almost invariably presided in the Irish conference; thus filling the presidential chair with honour, approbation, and great utility, for nearly thirty years.

Nor was this popularity the mere offspring of a momentary impulse. It continued to follow him through all the variations which thirty years can hardly fail to produce; and in their public assembly, toward the close of his mortal career, they expressed their sentiments in terms of decided approbation. And I transcribe their testimony with additional pleasure, from finding it recorded by an annotator in the work of Dr. Whitehead, his rival biographer of Mr. Wesley's life.

"Dr. Coke continued to visit the societies in different parts during Mr. Wesley's life. He has presided at conferences in Ireland when it was judged inexpedient for that man of God to cross the water. And that he fully answered the opinion formed of him by Mr. Wesley, must appear obvious even to those enemies whose puny efforts, so strenuously engaged to tarnish his character, have but tended to strengthen the Methodist societies and all liberal minds in that opinion. So prepossessed are the members of the Irish conference in favour of Dr. Coke, that, since Mr. Wesley's death, they have made it a constant request, that the English conference would indulge them by granting that their affectionate friend should preside at their annual meeting—at which he has, for the most part, accordingly presided, and under God has proved a great blessing. The following extracts from the English and Irish conferences in 1805, prove the latter assertion:—

"'Your readiness of mind to comply with our request, so often made, for our greatly respected friend and brother, Dr. Coke, convinces us still more and more of your affection toward us. We do, therefore, with confidence, unanimously request that he may be appointed our president the ensuing year. It will, we believe, afford you much pleasure to be informed that our love and respect for him increase every year; so that we were ready to look upon ourselves as orphans when contrary winds delayed his coming so long; but we

made prayer to God for him, and our gracious Lord sent him to us (in Dublin) the evening before our conference began.'

"To this solicitation the following reply was returned :—

"'In compliance with your request, we appoint the Rev. Dr. Coke to be the president of the next Irish conference, to be held in Dublin on the first Friday in July, 1806. He has long been to us a greatly beloved friend and brother; and we pray that he may meet you in all the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.'"*

If we turn from the affectionate approbation with which his labours were received in Ireland, to the benefits which resulted from them, his importance as an instrument in the Church of Christ will not appear in a less advantageous light. On making a comparative estimate between the state of Methodism in 1782, when he first presided in the first conference, and that which was exhibited in 1813, the last conference which he ever attended in Ireland, just before his departure for India, and the last in which his voice shall be ever heard, the result will be too striking to require any comment.

In the year 1782 there were in Ireland no more than fifteen circuits, thirty-four preachers, and about six thousand members in society, with but few preaching houses, and scanty congregations. But in the year 1813 the circuits, including eight missionary ones, which may be considered as exclusively of his establishment, amounted to fifty-six. The preachers, including the missionaries, and those who had grown infirm by their continued labours in the work of the ministry, were augmented to one hundred and twenty-one; and the members of society had increased to twenty-eight thousand, seven hundred, and seventy, of which number nine hundred and forty-seven had joined the society during the preceding year. From that period to the present, the work in that kingdom has continued to spread in a rapid manner; and although the missionary preachers have been occasionally exposed to persecution, their labours have been

* See Whitehead's Life of Mr. Wesley, vol. ii, p. 403, Dublin edition.

blessed to thousands, who continue to grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God.

As Dr. Coke, toward the latter period of his life, was chiefly engaged in the promoting of missions, his name stood at the head of the missionary department, in the appointments of the preachers. And as superintendent of the missions he regularly published, during the last seven years or more of his life, an annual report, in which he traced the rapid or progressive advancement of the work of God in various parts of the world. Among these it is pleasing to review the manner in which it has prospered in Ireland, and to trace the kind hand of Providence in preserving his ministers and faithful people in the midst of surrounding discouragements and dangers.

Since his removal from Europe, and ultimately from this terrestrial abode, the annual report has been published by the secretaries for the foreign and home missions. And from their statement, in the report for 1814, we may easily gather that the work, so happily begun, is still proceeding under the divine blessing in various parts of Ireland. "Knowledge," they observe, "in the estimation of all wise and good men, is the way to holiness and happiness. We have long lamented the gross ignorance, deep depravity, and extreme wretchedness of the great mass of Irish Catholics; and have used various means to enlighten their judgments, and turn them from Satan to God. Considerable success has crowned our past labours, whereby we are encouraged still to proceed in this labour of love. Our missionaries in Ireland are men of deep piety and steady zeal. Their labours are abundant, and their sufferings and privations great; but amid all they proceed in their work like primitive apostles. Much good has been done by their instrumentality this year; and pleasing prospects of future success continually open to their view. One of them, speaking of a very dark part of the country, says, 'The Lord has caused the wilderness and solitary places to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose!' In many places where the Bible had not been seen, it is now read with seriousness, attention, and prayer; and several have committed select passages to memory, and repeated

them to the preachers in a manner highly gratifying."* These observations almost exclusively refer to the state of the missions in Ireland, which, under God, owe their existence and establishment to the indefatigable exertions of Dr. Coke.

It is pleasing thus to reflect how the little one has become a thousand; how the borders of Zion are gradually enlarged; and how multitudes flock to the standard of the gospel, and embrace the truth as it is in Jesus. And although, whether a Paul shall plant or an Apollos shall water, it is only God who can give the increase; yet we cannot forget the favoured instrument which the Head of the church has been pleased to employ in the accomplishment of his own work. Those who have received distinguished honours from God have a strong claim to respect from their fellow creatures, and particularly from their fellow Christians. To neglect the instrument is to treat the almighty Agent with contempt; and to do this, is to be guilty of ingratitude toward both.

* Annual Report of the State of the Missions for 1814.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Wesley's early visit to America—Origin of Methodism in America—Mr. Embury, Mr. Strawbridge, and captain Webb, visit the continent—First preaching house built in 1768—Mr. Boardman and Mr. Pilmoor repair to America—Mr. Asbury goes thither in 1771—Mr. Wright, Mr. Shadford, and Mr. Rankin, in 1773—State of Methodism at the commencement of the war—Various occurrences during the unhappy conflict.

At an early period of Mr. Wesley's life, when zeal and a sense of duty began to direct his actions, he visited the continent of America in that ministerial character which he had not long assumed. He sailed from England the latter end of October, 1735, and returned again the first of February, 1738. Of the purity of his intentions, and his wishes to do good, no doubt what-

ever can be entertained. But the trials to which he was exposed, and the train of difficulties which he was obliged to encounter, during the short period of his residence abroad, rendered his situation exceedingly uncomfortable; so that he found himself rather in a school of discipline, than in a field of ministerial labour. But this expedition was not undertaken in vain. As to himself, he procured much spiritual light from the companions of his voyage; much knowledge of the state of religion in some parts of the continent; and realized an early specimen of those persecutions and storms which it was his lot to encounter through a considerable portion of his life. In the behalf of others whom Providence afterward raised him up to direct, he was enabled to make due allowance for injurious reports; to anticipate some of those obstacles which they were almost sure to meet; and lastly to arrange his future plans for the benefit of mankind, according to the genius of the people, and the manners which prevailed among them, in the ample field through which his future labours extended.

It was not long after his return from America, that God was pleased to reveal himself spiritually to his soul; and, through a train of providences which no mortal could anticipate, and to which his natural feelings were repugnant, to thrust him out into the world to call sinners to repentance. The divine approbation accompanied his exertions. Many were converted to God; and of these, several began in a local sphere to assist him in his labours.

Among these local preachers there was one whose name was Philip Embury. This man was a native of Ireland, and he had for some time raised his voice for God; but through some of those vicissitudes attendant on human life, but which have no connection with the present occasion, he had embarked for the western continent, and taken up his residence in the city of New-York. On his arrival he found the standard of morals to be exceedingly low. The city was not only given to spiritual idolatry, but the inhabitants were addicted to almost every vice. His spirit, therefore, like that of St. Paul when he visited Athens, was stirred within

him, and he began to preach salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Having no chapel, he began by instructing his little congregation in his own dwelling house. At first, those who assembled consisted of his own countrymen, who, like himself, had emigrated from their native land. The report of his preaching, however, soon drew others to hear; and their numbers still increasing, his dwelling house became insufficient to contain the Irish emigrants, the native citizens, and the English residents, that composed his groupe of hearers. To remedy this defect, a large room was instantly rented, and the expense was paid by their voluntary contributions. In this state things continued for some time. Mr. Embury was faithful and conscientious in the discharge of his duty; the people grew attentive, many became serious, and several found peace with God. And as the present preaching of Mr. Embury had no connection with that of Mr. Wesley, when he visited the continent about thirty years before, we may view this as the first dawning of Methodism on the vast continent of America: and its period may be fixed about the year 1767.

But it is not solely to the active exertions of Mr. Embury that America stands indebted for the introduction of Methodism. Several other pious Methodists emigrated nearly about the same time, and scattered seed in various parts. Among these was Mr. Strawbridge, who was also a native of Ireland. This pious man, having no connection with Mr. Embury, and perhaps at first scarcely any knowledge of him, landed in the state of Maryland, and took up his residence in Frederic county, where he began to erect the standard of the gospel, and to call sinners to repentance. His word also was attended with a divine blessing to the souls of many, who were led to call upon the name of the Lord, and to find that he had still power upon earth to forgive sins.

But although these pious men continued to labour, and to see the fruits of their exertions in the conversion of many, and the reformation of multitudes, no regular consistency was given to their endeavours until the spirited efforts of captain Webb drew the attention of

Mr. Wesley and his conference to the state of religion on the western continent, then considered as a political part of Britain, though separated from our shores by the Atlantic Ocean.

About the year 1765, Mr. Webb, who was a military officer, had attended Mr. Wesley's preaching in Bristol, and God had rendered the word a blessing to his soul. Being a man of strong sensibilities and lively feelings, his zeal for the cause of God triumphed over the consideration of his military character, and he began publicly to recommend to others that grace which maketh wise unto salvation. At this time he was a lieutenant in the army; but being afterward advanced to the rank of captain, he has been generally distinguished by the name of captain Webb. This officer was in the battle of Quebec, where he received a wound in his arm, and lost the use of his right eye, on that memorable occasion which deprived general Wolfe of his life.

The first place in which captain Webb appeared in public as a preacher was Bath, at a time when, through some accident, the preacher who had been expected did not arrive. His zeal recommended him to the notice of his hearers, and much good attended his ministry. Having some time afterward received the appointment of barrack master at Albany, in America, he proceeded thither, carrying with him that strong zeal for the cause of God for which he was afterward distinguished through life. It does not appear that captain Webb, on his arrival in America, had any personal knowledge either of Mr. Embury at New-York, or of Mr. Strawbridge in Frederic county. He, however, soon found them out; and they were rendered instrumental in assisting each other, and in promoting, on a more enlarged plan, the work of their heavenly Father.

Captain Webb, on his arrival at Albany, began by establishing family prayer in his own house. This was soon circulated as a singular circumstance; and from his being an officer, the notice which his conduct excited soon grew to astonishment. Several desired to join his family in prayer; and all who made the request were readily admitted. The neighbourhood soon flocked to his house, and, as occasion offered, he warned

them to flee from the wrath to come, and recommended the Saviour of mankind. The success which crowned these domestic efforts soon induced him to extend his labours; and under this impression he paid a visit to Mr. Embury at New-York.

On being invited to preach, he appeared before his congregation in his military dress; the novelty of which so attracted the attention of the people that the room which had been rented was soon found insufficient to contain the congregations; and to hire one that was sufficiently large was a task of no common difficulty. A room, however, sixty feet long, and eighteen feet wide, was at length procured; but as this was also shortly found equally as inconvenient as the former had been, through the increase of hearers, the building of a preaching house was taken into serious consideration. This was undertaken and accomplished in the year 1768, being the first Methodist preaching house that ever presented itself to view in the western world.

From New-York captain Webb proceeded to Long Island to visit some of his relations who resided there. In this place he also preached, and formed an infant society. The city of Philadelphia likewise witnessed his labours, and several of his hearers derived much benefit from his ministry. But it was in New-York that the gospel seemed principally to flourish. In this city a permanent congregation was established, and a considerable society formed; and from the general spirit which seemed to be manifested by all, the fields appeared white unto harvest.

Under these views and considerations, captain Webb, in conjunction with his associates, wrote to Mr. Wesley in England, giving him a plain statement of facts, and requesting him at the ensuing conference to appoint some preachers to come over, and prosecute the work that was so happily and providentially begun. Being always ready to embrace every opening of divine Providence, Mr. Wesley, at the conference of 1769, introduced the case of America in so favourable a light, that two of his preachers, Mr. Richard Boardman and Mr. Joseph Pilmoor, volunteered their services to cross the Atlantic, and make an effort to introduce the itinerant

plan in America. Their offers were accepted; and as the preaching house in New-York had involved the infant society in some pecuniary embarrassments, "We determined (says Mr. Wesley) to send them fifty pounds, as a token of our brotherly love." Mr. Boardman and Mr. Pilmoor sailed accordingly; and, reaching the place of their destination in safety, began their itinerant labours, and thus became the first regular Methodist missionaries who ever visited the western continent.

A few days after their landing, Mr. Pilmoor wrote a letter to Mr. Wesley, of which the following is an extract; it is dated Philadelphia, October 31st, 1769:—

"Rev. Sir,—By the blessing of God we are safely arrived here, after a tedious passage of nine weeks.

"We were not a little surprised to find captain Webb in town, and a society of about a hundred members, who desire to be in close connection with you. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

"I have preached several times, and the people flock to hear in multitudes. Sunday evening I went out upon the common. I had the stage appointed for the horse race for my pulpit, and I think between four and five thousand hearers, who heard with attention still as night. Blessed be God for field preaching. When I began to talk of preaching at five o'clock in the morning, the people thought it would not answer in America: however, I resolved to try, and had a very good congregation.

"Here seems to be a great and effectual door opening in this country, and I hope many souls will be gathered in. The people in general like to hear the word, and seem to have some ideas of salvation by grace."

From Philadelphia Mr. Pilmoor proceeded to Maryland, visiting this state, together with those of Virginia and North Carolina. In all these states he preached with considerable success; forming societies in various parts, and witnessing the happy effects resulting from the mission in which he was engaged. Throughout the whole he discovered the teachable disposition of the people and their willingness to hear; and thus, as an instrument in the hand of God, laid an extensive founda-

tion for that amazing work which has since been carried on with such unexampled success.

Mr. Boardman, who sailed with Mr. Pilmoor in the same ship, and with him landed at Philadelphia, immediately took his leave, and hastened to New-York, in which city the preaching house had been erected. On his arrival he found the prospect before him equally as pleasing as it had been represented by captain Webb; and, under the mingled sensations of gratitude and hope, entered on his ministerial work. Determined, however, to make some trial before he transmitted a report across the Atlantic, he waited till the 24th of April, 1770, on which day he wrote the following account:—

"Our house contains about seventeen hundred hearers. About a third part of those who attend the preaching get in; the rest are glad to hear without. There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the word as I never saw before. They have no preaching in some parts of the back settlements. I doubt not but an effectual door will be opened among them. O may the Most High now give his Son the heathen for his inheritance! The number of blacks that attend the preaching affects me much."

As the prospects of these preachers continued to be inviting, and the work to increase in their hands, they transmitted to Mr. Wesley such pleasing accounts of their success that, at the conference of 1771, he appointed Mr. Francis Asbury and Mr. Richard Wright to repair to the continent to assist their brethren already established there. They proceeded thither accordingly, and joined in the common employment. Mr. Wright, however, soon returned, and desisted from travelling. But Mr. Asbury remained firmly at his post; outrode all the storms to which the American revolution gave rise: and continued a hoary veteran in the cause of God, to witness the changes which have taken place in favour of Christianity through the long lapse of forty-four years. This truly apostolic man has lately been called to his eternal reward.

Mr. Asbury, on his arrival, soon perceived that the work which had been so happily begun, was confined

chiefly to the larger towns; but that, under proper regulations, it was susceptible of a much greater extension, if carried into the villages and secluded plantations that were scattered throughout the country. To these departments he therefore devoted his time and talents; and, in the blessing which attended his ministry, and the great success which he found in the formation of societies, he thought himself amply rewarded for all the inconveniences with which his solitary excursions were attended. But while he was thus engaged in visiting the plantations and villages, an undue eagerness to extend the work in the towns had unhappily led to a comparative neglect of discipline. Some apprehensions of this seem to have been anticipated in England; for, in 1773, Mr. Wesley appointed Mr. Thomas Rankin and Mr. George Shadford to America, investing them with powers which none of their predecessors had ever presumed to exercise.

On their arrival, they soon discovered the evil which Mr. Wesley had sent them to remedy; and, like faithful servants, they began their necessary though painful duty. The loss of the superfluous and unfruitful branches did not, however, hinder the growth of the spiritual tree. The wounds which were made, soon healed, and it became more vigorous and fruitful than it had been before. It is to be regretted that any occasions should exist to require the exercise of such external discipline; but experience teaches many important lessons, which mere abstract reasoning finds it difficult to learn. Every skilful gardener knows that the pruning knife, when applied to the branches, is not less necessary to the perfection of his vine than the rich manure which supports its roots.

Mr. Rankin and Mr. Shadford continued on the continent about five years. During this time they travelled through North Carolina and New-York, and through all the other states which lie between these provinces. In many places their preaching was attended with particular success; and the discipline which they had everywhere enforced, rendered their characters truly venerable, the societies which they formed more exemplary, and the old ones more pure. But on the approach of that un-

happy war which shortly afterward broke out between the mother country and the American colonies, and which finally terminated in the dismemberment of the empire, and the independence of the United States, a period was put to their usefulness, and to their residence on the continent.

On the general state of Methodism in the colonies, at the commencement of hostilities, Mr. Rankin observes as follows: "At our little conference in Philadelphia, in July, 1773, we had about a thousand in the different societies, and six or seven preachers: and in May, 1777, we had forty preachers in the different circuits, and about seven thousand members in the societies; beside many hundreds of negroes, who were convinced of sin, and many of them happy in the love of God. Were it not for the civil war, I have reason to believe the work of God would have flourished in a more abundant manner, as both rich and poor gladly embraced the truths of the gospel, and received the preachers with open arms."

On the great question respecting the justice or injustice of the American war, it is well known that opposite opinions have been entertained. It is not for us to censure or applaud either party, or to take a retrospective survey of the political transactions of departed years. It is, however, well known that Mr. Wesley, on this agitated question, took a decided part; and, in his "Calm Address to the Colonists," reprobated their conduct in terms not less pointed than were those in which he attempted to justify the conduct of the mother country. It was providential that some circumstances occurred to prevent this Calm Address from raising a tempest, which, in all probability, would in this critical moment have swept Methodism from the continent at a stroke, and perhaps have banished it for ever.

The opinion of Mr. Wesley, respecting the conduct of the Americans, in resisting the demands of Britain, was soon echoed by many of his preachers, and particularly by Mr. Rankin and his associate ministers established to itinerate in America. In England these sentiments might be expressed with safety; but in the colonies the subject was seen with very different eyes.

The consequence was, that the preachers on the continent in connection with Mr. Wesley were everywhere viewed as enemies to the cause of liberty, as the secret instruments of despotic power, and as men unworthy of being cherished in the bosom of a country whose sons had taken up arms in support of their independence.

As the clamour became general, and the tide of public opinion was too strong to be resisted, all the preachers who had gone from England, with the exception of Mr. Asbury, were obliged to withdraw from the colonies, to escape the effects of popular vengeance. From this period, therefore, the work was at a stand; and the friends of Methodism were exposed to those vicissitudes which are always generated in a country which is the seat of war; and to the mortification of being viewed as suspicious characters. It was through considerable difficulties that the preachers effected their escape, and reached in safety their native land.

Supported by the rectitude of his own intentions to have no concern with political questions, and conscious of having said nothing that could offend either party, on the subject of the impending war, Mr. Asbury determined to remain at the post of duty, and wait the event of the approaching storm. It was a happy circumstance that he was inspired with this holy resolution, since it is owing to him, under the superintending care of God, that Methodism was enabled to survive the shock which convulsed Europe and the western world. How far those preachers who set Mr. Asbury an example which he disdained to follow, acted consistently with the spirit of their profession, may furnish room for opposite opinions. But we have no right to decide upon the propriety or impropriety of their conduct, unless we make ourselves intimately acquainted with all the local circumstances of their situation. Of this momentous crisis Dr. Coke has delivered his sentiments in the following words:—

"The war, which at this time had broken out between the mother country and her colonies, impeded the work in a considerable manner, and for some time shut up nearly all communication between them. The distresses

to which both the societies and preachers were exposed, were very terrible. The clergy abandoned their flocks; and in many instances the British missionaries, following their example, forsook their spheres of action. Mr. Asbury alone, unterrified by the threatening sword, remained in his station.

"Surrounded by dangers on every side, his vigour increased as his colleagues declined the work; and, under the blessing of Providence, it was by his unwearied exertions that the flame of religion was kept alive, while thousands both of its friends and enemies fell in the conflict. But whatever impediments the work of God might have experienced, the societies increased amid the partial desertions of their friends and the horrors of war."*

But although Mr. Asbury remained faithful to his post, he was not always permitted to exercise the functions of his office. As an individual, his conduct was placed beyond the reach of censure; but the general suspicions under which the preachers and the societies laboured, were transferred to him as an official and public character; in consequence of which he became an object of popular reproach. To avoid the effects of this unmerited indignation he was obliged to retire from public view. But it pleased God to raise him up friends, who provided an asylum in which he was sheltered two years, while the tempest raged in all its violence. During this time the place of his retreat was at the house of Mr. White, in the county of Kent, in the state of Delaware. In the house of this gentleman, who was a justice of the peace, and a member of the Methodist society, Mr. Asbury twice convened some native American preachers, and held two diminutive conferences. He was, however, at length happily released from his confinement, through the kind interposition of John Dickenson, Esq., the predecessor of the celebrated Dr. Franklin in the government of Pennsylvania. From Mr. Dickenson he received such letters of recommendation as enabled him to appear in public, and finally to travel through the states without molestation.

* Coke's History of the West Indies, vol. i, p. 212.

But although it was against the preachers from England that the popular odium was principally directed, even those who were natives were not wholly exempted from trouble. To break off all connection with England, and to annihilate all acknowledgment of her dominion, a law was enacted which required an oath of allegiance to the United States to be taken by all. This was a measure to which many hesitated to submit; and the consequence was, that fines and imprisonment followed. Among the Methodists several suffered severely on this account. It is, however, a tribute due to justice to acknowledge that the rights of conscience were generally treated with tenderness, even by those who were appointed to carry the laws into execution. But above all, the hand of God appeared conspicuously in providing various ways for the deliverance of those who were imprisoned, and that not unfrequently through the interposition of men who were strangers to genuine religion.

From what principle this liberality of conduct arose it is difficult with certainty to determine. Their political creed included universal toleration; but their laws militated against the principles of their constitution. It is easy to speculate upon the sources of human opinions and actions; but on the present occasion we cannot avoid resolving all into the overruling providence of God, who thus defended his faithful servants. In no instance, perhaps, was this faithfulness more apparent than when the preachers were brought before the tribunals of justice. Here, in reply to interrogations, they bore such a strong testimony against sin, resisted every charge that could involve them in the political questions which were agitated, and pleaded the cause of the gospel with so much eloquence, that their judges were ready to say, "Almost ye persuade us to be Christians." On one of these occasions, a preacher of Baltimore, whose name was Moore, delivered such a defensive testimony at the bar as filled the judges and the whole court with admiration at the elegance of his diction, the comprehensiveness of his expressions, and the energy of his arguments. But the effect of this faithfulness is still more strikingly exemplified in the fol-

lowing anecdote, which occurred in the state of Maryland.

In the midst of these commotions, it happened that Mr. *Chew*, one of the preachers, was brought before Mr. Downs, then sheriff of the county in which the trial took place, and afterward a member of the general assembly of the state. On Mr. Chew's appearance, the sheriff demanded of the prisoner, if he were a minister of the gospel? On receiving from Mr. Chew an answer in the affirmative, he required him to take the oath of allegiance to the United States. Mr. Chew replied that he had scruples on his mind, and therefore could not consent at present. Mr. Downs then informed him that he was bound on oath to execute the laws, and must in that case commit him to prison. Mr. Chew replied with great calmness that he by no means wished to be the cause of perjury, and therefore was perfectly resigned to suffer the penalty incurred. "You are a strange man," cried the sheriff, "and I cannot bear to punish you. I will therefore make my own house your prison." He accordingly committed him under his hand and seal to his own house, in which place he kept him for three months, during which time the sheriff was awakened, and his lady converted to God. They soon afterward joined the society; and Mr. Downs, with the assistance of some neighbouring gentlemen, built a preaching house for the society at Tuckaho, the place where he lived.

Satisfied, however, that the preachers who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the states were not actuated by any principles of hostility to the cause of America, their case was shortly afterward taken into serious consideration by the assembly of Maryland. And in order to preserve them from suffering for conscience' sake, and to prevent the magistrates and judges from having the trouble of attending to such cases, when others of more magnitude and importance demanded all their attention, an act was passed by the legislative body expressly to allow the Methodist preachers to exercise their ministerial duty, without taking the oath of allegiance. This act produced the desired effect. In this state their restrictions were at an end; the preach-

ing was re-established; and, in the midst of public war, they continued to enjoy domestic peace until the independence of the United States was acknowledged throughout Europe, and a communication was reopened between Great Britain and this part of the western continent.

In the other states the legal restrictions continued in force during the war; but toward the period of its termination the rigour of the laws was much relaxed. And although the societies, during these commotions, received a great acquisition of members, the effects of the war were awfully conspicuous in the neglect of those ordinances which followed the overthrow of the Establishment. It was a survey of these calamitous effects which induced Mr. Wesley to have recourse to a certain measure, and to introduce a form of church government, which will be described in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER V.

Effects of the war on the Methodist societies in America—Review of the causes which led to the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church—Preparatory steps taken in order to Dr. Coke's ordination—Copy of letters of ordination—Letter of Mr. Wesley to Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, stating the ground on which he acted—Principles on which Mr. Wesley acted, stated and vindicated—Apostolical succession not to be proved, either from the church of Alexandria, Antioch, or Rome.

It is easy to perceive that, while the church is connected with the state, if calamities overtake the latter, the former cannot wholly escape. In the American colonies both were united; and the revolution which terminated in political independence, led to the subversion of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The church, being considered as an instrument in the hands of the British senate, became the first object of attack at the commencement of the revolution. We have already seen that "the clergy abandoned their flocks" on the ap-

proach of danger; and we learn from the event that the Americans were not forward either to supply their vacant pulpits, or to fill their empty churches.

Among men who are destitute of the power of godliness, the loss of its form was viewed with indifference; but with those who enjoyed the former, the privation of the latter appeared in a very serious light. When the clergy of the Church of England had forsaken the country, and secured themselves by flight, the members of the Methodist societies found themselves totally deprived of the sacraments, which they had been accustomed to receive from them; and for their children they could obtain no baptism. For the administration of these ordinances, they applied to the Presbyterians, to the Independents, and to the Baptists. But they were refused by all, unless they would renounce their connection with Mr. Wesley, and join the societies of those to whom they successively appealed.

Being unwilling to purchase baptism and the Lord's supper at so exorbitant a price, and yet dissatisfied to remain destitute of those privileges which they had been accustomed to enjoy, the societies appealed to the preachers; and, after stating their complaints, prevailed upon many of them to introduce their case to Mr. Asbury, who was now considered as the principal person among the Methodists in America. This the preachers promised to do; and, accordingly, in the year 1778, they requested him to adopt some measures for a speedy compliance with their reasonable demands.

Mr. Asbury, on hearing their statement and request, found himself in an unpleasant situation. From principle he was strongly attached to the episcopacy which had been abolished; and he dreaded to countenance any mode of conduct that might seem to interfere with its formerly acknowledged authority. And yet, at the same time, the statement given in, respecting the situation of the people, and the reasonableness of their requests, appeared almost too powerful to be resisted. Thus circumstanced, he scarcely knew how to act; being alike apprehensive of unpleasant consequences which would result from his refusal, and from his compliance. In order, therefore, to preserve peace, he endeavoured to

postpone the subject for some future consideration, conceiving that, as affairs were yet in an unsettled state, the period might arrive when things would return into their former channel. And, finally, that if the people could be prevailed upon to suffer their present privations with patience until the tempest had subsided, the whole body of Methodists in America would escape the reproach of deviating from Mr. Wesley's avowed and primitive plan.

Affairs had, however, now reached a crisis, in which indecision was not calculated to give satisfaction. The preachers who had imbibed the spirit of the people, though satisfied with the purity of Mr. Asbury's intention, were far from being pleased with the result of his reasonings. They had already waited till exhausted patience could continue no longer, and they were determined to bring the question to an immediate issue. Mr. Asbury, finding that he was brought to a crisis, finally determined in favour of his own attachments, and absolutely refused to give either preachers or people any redress.

On hearing his refusal, a train of consequences which he had scarcely anticipated, began immediately to appear. A majority of the preachers, less scrupulous than himself as to the propriety of administering the rite of baptism and the Lord's supper, instantly withdrew from him, and through him from all connection with Mr. Wesley. In this state of separation they selected from among their own body three of their senior and more respectable brethren, appointing them to ordain others by the imposition of hands. These, therefore, went forth in the name of God, and administered the sacraments to all whom they judged proper to receive them. The clamour of the people immediately subsided; all were satisfied with the enjoyment of their returning privileges; and prosperity became the companion of peace.

Mr. Asbury, in the meanwhile, who had not yet shaken off the rusty fetters of "apostolical succession," found himself comparatively deserted by those whose respect for him still remained undiminished. Against the illegality of their proceedings he bore a public tes-

timony, denying the authority by which the preachers acted, and declaring the ordination to which they had given existence invalid. With individuals his arguments had weight, and many hesitated to follow the measures they had adopted. In this manner he proceeded until he had proselyted some, had silenced others, and had shaken the faith of all; so that at a subsequent conference he found means to procure a vote, which declared the former ordination unscriptural. The breach was soon healed; a general reconciliation took place; and Mr. Asbury once more resumed the full exercise of that authority of which he had, for a season, been partially deprived.

But the night of a long, an expensive, and unsuccessful war to Britain was drawing toward a close; and the dawn of returning peace, which gave independence to America, was just beginning to appear when the preceding accommodation took place. Mr. Asbury had been very successful in spreading the gospel in several parts of the back settlements. He therefore wanted more assistance than the United States could afford; and as soon as a communication was opened between England and America, he wrote to Mr. Wesley for a supply of preachers to hasten to the continent with all possible despatch. At the same time he informed Mr. Wesley of the various events which had taken place respecting the Methodists, during the war, and pointed out the condition the people were in, being equally destitute of baptism for their children, and of the Lord's supper for themselves. These cases were earnestly recommended to Mr. Wesley's serious consideration. And as it was soon discovered that a national establishment was to rear its head in the United States no more, the subject was of too much importance to be neglected, and the question of too much magnitude to be hastily decided.

Mr. Wesley was now far advanced in years, and having made provision for the government of the societies in England, after his decease, he thought this a providential call for something of a similar nature to be done for America. Having therefore weighed with much deliberation the various circumstances in which his transatlantic followers were placed, he was perfectly satis-

fieu that the form of government which he had provided for England was by no means adapted for America. And, finally, it was obvious to him that no form of government could be acceptable, unless it included a satisfactory authority vested in the preachers to administer baptism and the Lord's supper. And nothing of this kind could possibly be permanent, unless some general superintendent should be appointed, in the first instance, from hence, to transmit that authority to posterity, by what name soever he might be distinguished.

To accomplish these purposes, after revolving all the possible forms of church government in his mind, he could find none so well adapted to the exigencies of their condition as that which is episcopal. On this therefore he finally fixed his eye, and proceeded to take measures for executing his resolution. This resolution was, however, not the result of a momentary impulse. More than a year had elapsed since he had begun to revolve it in his mind; during which time he had communicated his thoughts to several persons. But how formidable soever the objections were which any one could raise, he found none equal in magnitude to the evil that his plan was designed to remedy; and he could learn from none a better form than that which he was about to adopt.

The zeal, the activity, and the piety which Dr. Coke had for several years manifested, both in England and Ireland, in conjunction with his being a regularly ordained minister of the Church of England, all combined to point him out to Mr. Wesley as the most suitable person in the connection to engage in this arduous work, and to assume that character with which he was about to invest him. Accordingly, in the month of February, 1784, he called Dr. Coke into his private chamber, and after some preparatory observations introduced the important subject to him in nearly the following manner:—

"That, as the revolution in America had separated the United States from the mother country for ever, and the Episcopal Establishment was utterly abolished, the societies had been represented to him in a most deplorable condition. That an appeal had also been made to

him through Mr. Asbury, in which he was requested to provide for them some mode of church government, suited to their exigencies; and that having long and seriously revolved the subject in his thoughts, he intended to adopt the plan which he was now about to unfold. That as he had invariably endeavoured, in every step he had taken, to keep as closely to the Bible as possible, so, on the present occasion, he hoped he was not about to deviate from it. That, keeping his eye upon the conduct of the primitive churches in the ages of unadulterated Christianity, he had much admired the mode of ordaining bishops which the church of Alexandria had practised. That, to preserve its purity, that church would never suffer the interference of a foreign bishop in any of their ordinations; but that the presbyters of that venerable apostolic church, on the death of a bishop, exercised the right of ordaining another from their own body, by the laying on of their own hands; and that this practice continued among them for two hundred years, till the days of Dionysius. And finally, that, being himself a presbyter, he wished Dr. Coke to accept ordination from his hands, and to proceed in that character to the continent of America, to superintend the societies in the United States."

Dr. Coke was at first startled at a measure so unprecedented in modern days; and he expressed some doubts as to the validity of Mr. Wesley's authority to constitute so important an appointment. But the arguments of lord King, which had proselyted Mr. Wesley, were recommended to his attention, and time was allowed him to deliberate on the result. Two months, however, had scarcely elapsed, before he wrote to Mr. Wesley, informing him that his objections were silenced, and that he was ready to co-operate with him in any way that was calculated to promote the glory of God and the good of souls.

At the ensuing conference, which was held in Leeds, 1784, Mr. Wesley stated his intention to the preachers present; and from that period he considered the appointment as actually made, although the ratification did not take place until a few days afterward. At this conference Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey offered their

services to accompany Dr. Coke in the character of missionaries; and being accepted, they became his companions in his first voyage to America. It is to this measure that Mr. Wesley alludes in the following observations, which he has inserted in page 71 of his twentieth journal.

"On Wednesday, September 1st, being now clear in my own mind, I took a step which I had long weighed, and appointed three of our brethren to go and serve the desolate sheep in America, which I verily believe will be much to the glory of God." And that he did not, on calm deliberation, reflect with sorrow on the step he had now taken, may be gathered from his own language, inserted in the minutes of conference for the year 1786.

"Judging," says he, "this (namely, the peculiar condition of the societies in America after the war) to be a case of necessity, I took a step which, for peace and quietness I had refrained from taking many years; I exercised that power which I am fully persuaded the great Shepherd and Bishop of the Church has given me. I appointed three of our labourers to go and help them, by not only preaching the word of God, but likewise administering the Lord's supper, and baptizing their children throughout that vast tract of land."

When the conference at Leeds, in 1784, ended, Mr. Wesley repaired to Bristol, and Dr. Coke to London, to make arrangements for his departure. He had not, however, been long in London, before he received a letter from Mr. Wesley, requesting him to repair immediately to Bristol, to receive fuller powers; and to bring with him the Rev. Mr. Creighton, a regularly ordained minister, who had long officiated in Mr. Wesley's chapels in London, and assisted him in various branches of his ministerial duties. "The doctor and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol, when, with their assistance, he ordained Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey, presbyters for America; and being peculiarly attached to every rite of the Church of England, did afterward ordain Dr. Coke a superintendent, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal."* Of

* Coke's and Moore's Life of Mr. Wesley, p. 459.

these letters of ordination the following is a faithful copy, carefully transcribed from the original in Mr. Wesley's own handwriting, preserved among the papers of the late Dr. Coke :—

"To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting :

"Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the same church : and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers—

"Know all men, that I, *John Wesley*, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And therefore, under the protection of almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart, as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands, and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

"JOHN WESLEY."

Dr. Coke continued in Bristol nearly three weeks, from the date of the preceding document, making preparation for his departure, and waiting for the sailing of some vessel in which he and his companions might procure a passage. It was during this interval that Mr. Wesley wrote the following letter, which Dr. Coke was directed to print and circulate among the societies on his arrival in America :—

"*Bristol, September* 10, 1784.

"To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America:—

"By a very uncommon train of providences many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice, and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch.

"Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused; not only for peace sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national Church, to which I belonged.

"But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish minister; so that for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize or administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

"I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England, (I think the best constituted national church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day in all the congrega-

tions, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

"If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, 1. I desired the bishop of London to ordain one, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them now, they would expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the state and the English hierarchy we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

"JOHN WESLEY."

*It is hardly to be expected that steps so extraordinary as those which Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke had thus

* As it was the lot of Dr. Coke, in a subsequent period of his life, to turn his attention to the question now under consideration, though in another form, it may not be amiss in this place to state the occasion and manner of it.

Sometime in the year 1802 the Rev. George Frederick Nott, B. D., published a volume of sermons, which he entitled, "Religious Enthusiasm considered, in eight sermons preached before the University of Oxford, at the Lecture founded by John Bampton, A. M." In these sermons he introduced the personal characters of the Rev. John Wesley and the Rev. George Whitefield; and throughout the whole volume endeavoured by artifices, from which neither truth nor charity has received any considerable acquisition, to make them appear odious. And whoever views these venerable men only through Mr. Nott's discoloured medium, can hardly avoid concluding that they deserve to be ranked among the most flagitious, the most ridiculous, and the most contemptible of the human race. Perhaps it was an act of charity in Mr. Nott to allow them the honour of ranking among the human species!

taken, would be suffered to pass in silence, especially by those who watched their conduct with critical malevolence. In no branch of their public labours, in no part of their ministerial career, has their character been so severely reprehended as on the present occasion. These reprehensions, however, have in general been made by men who were more eager to contend for apostolical succession, than for that faith once delivered to the saints.

But to what reproach soever their characters might

In the course of these sermons Mr. Nott proves himself a sturdy stickler for episcopal ordination, and a furious advocate for apostolical succession. He, therefore, becomes the opponent of every one who questions the infallibility of ministerial authority; and brandishes the ecclesiastical whip over every man who presumes to doubt the certainty and the purity of divine rights.

It was not until January 18, 1806, that Dr. Coke obtained a sight of this volume; when, after perusing its pages, it was his intention to publish a specific reply to the invectives and arguments which it contained. The plan which he intended to pursue was that of a series of letters addressed to the author; in which he meant to controvert Mr. Nott's principles, to contradict his monstrous misrepresentations, and to vindicate the character of his deceased friends. Upon this plan the reply proceeded, and the manuscripts were prepared for the press. But on a second review of the subject, he was decidedly of opinion that Mr. Nott's strictures were too severe to make converts, and too monstrous even to gain credit with thinking people. And more especially, as several years had elapsed since the sermons first appeared, and as they were comparatively but little known, while the characters of Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield were too firmly established to be injured by calumny and caricature, he relinquished his design, and consigned the manuscript to silence and the events of future years.

From these papers, as the question before us is agitated, and the principle investigated upon which Mr. Wesley acted in his ordination of Dr. Coke, and in writing the letter with which he furnished him on his departure to America, it may not be amiss to call some of the more appropriate arguments into light. As, therefore, the work is unpublished, I take the liberty of transcribing from their original sources, and of applying, in his own defence on the present occasion, the evidences adduced in behalf of his departed friends. In these evidences we may perceive his own views of the validity of his ordination by the hands of Mr. Wesley, after a lapse of more than twenty years. We may also perceive the sandy foundation on which the guarded fort of apostolical succession rests, and on what grounds the conduct of Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke may be rationally and scripturally defended in the present case, even independently of that justification which the necessities of the Methodists in America gave to the measure.

have been exposed, nothing can be more evident, from the particular situation in which the members of the Methodist societies in America were placed at the conclusion of the war, than that they were under the necessity of receiving baptism and the Lord's supper from the Methodist preachers, or of remaining destitute of these ordinances altogether. Now it is admitted, even by those who have argued against Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke with the greatest degree of violence, that these ordinances were necessary; and by consequence they virtually allow, under existing circumstances, those very measures which they openly condemn.

If the ordinances are necessary, the administration of them must be necessary also, and this will involve the necessity of administrators. Now where there can be only one description of men to assume this character, there can be no room for alternative or choice; and where the possibility of alternative and choice is excluded, there can be no justifiable ground for censure or reproach. This was precisely the situation in which Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and the preachers stood, in relation to the societies in America. Now, if it was a duty incumbent on them to administer the ordinances, it was equally their duty to procure all the qualifications they could acquire, agreeably to the oracles of God. If, therefore, it should finally appear that Mr. Wesley had no right to ordain Dr. Coke, and that Dr. Coke had no right to ordain Mr. Asbury, the invalidity of these ordinations cannot affect their previous and independent qualifications as ministers of the gospel; for even on this ground their obligations to comply with the requests of the people cannot be denied. The circumstances of their situation, even admitting the invalidity of the ordination, will therefore place them on a rock from which no argument can easily dislodge them, whatever irregularity may appear in their proceedings.

But although the peculiarity of their case will thus furnish arguments in their favour, the ground upon which Mr. Wesley stood is far from being so defenceless as to render such an apology necessary. There was a period when the Protestants were pressed by the Papists with arguments precisely similar to those that

were urged against Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke on the present occasion. And these were triumphantly repelled with weapons which the predecessors of their present antagonists had instructed them to wield. The Act of Uniformity had again called them from their arsenal; and the controversies that followed had imparted to them a polish which had even given them a keener edge. The right, therefore, which Mr. Wesley exercised in the ordination of Dr. Coke, was ably defended by Dr. Calamy in his reply to Bishop Hoadly; and, with some trifling variations, the accumulated force of all his arguments may be brought to bear in favour of the delegated power which Dr. Coke exercised on his arrival in America.

"That our ordination by presbyters, of which Mr. Hoadly takes the liberty to speak so contemptibly, is to all intents and purposes (except that of gaining church preferment) valid, I prove by four arguments.

"First, I argue from the identity of bishops and presbyters. This argument has been often teased and worried, and yet it is far from being breathless. But I will put it in the words of the learned Dr. Whitaker, who was the celebrated King's professor of divinity in the university of Cambridge. Duraeus, challenging him to declare how the ministers among the reformed came by their call to that sacred office, bids him tell him, if he could, who called forth Luther, and Calvin, and Beza, and the rest? Dr. Whitaker answers him, That as for Luther, and Zuinglius, and Bucer, and Oecolompadius, and many others of them, they were authorized presbyters and teachers in the Church of Rome, ordained, and universally owned among them; and that therefore they *being presbyters, and presbyters being by divine right the same as bishops, they might warrantably set other presbyters over the churches*."*

To those who ask on what principle Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke to preside over the Methodist societies in America, we might urge this same reply. He was a regular presbyter, ordained in the Church of England, and, therefore, "presbyters being by divine right the

* Calamy's Defence of Moderate Nonconformity, vol. i, p. 70.

same as bishops, he might warrantably ordain other presbyters, and set them over other churches" on the western continent; especially as the bishop of London had refused to ordain one, as stated in Mr. Wesley's letter to Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury. Perhaps it may be said that, admitting Mr. Wesley had a right to ordain presbyters, this would not justify him in ordaining a bishop. To this objection the author just quoted has furnished a clear and explicit answer, which I will give in nearly his own words.

"That presbyters are by divine right the same as bishops appears from hence, that such as were solemnly set apart for the sacred ministry, and intrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and authorized to administer all ordinances in the church to the faithful committed to their care, and in Scripture styled bishops and elders, or presbyters, without any mark of distinction. To be convinced of this, a man need but turn to the several passages where they are mentioned.

"St. Paul, writing to the Philippians, directs his epistle to all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. He mentions bishops and deacons, but no presbyters. Had there been any presbyters distinct from bishops, it is hard to give a reason why they should be passed over in silence. It is more rational to apprehend these bishops were no other than the presbyters of the church. And this sentiment is confirmed by the Syriac, one of the most ancient versions of the New Testament, which reads it 'presbyters and deacons.' There could not have been several bishops at Philippi, in the sense the Church of England gives to that word. There could not be several pastors of many churches in one such little place as that. They must be therefore proper presbyters belonging to that flock. We need not wonder to hear of many such in a church; for we are told that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church, Acts xiv, 23.

"The same apostle, in his Epistle to Timothy, lays down the duties of bishops and deacons, and the qualifications necessary for both, without saying a word of presbyters; of whom it is hard to suppose he should, upon such an occasion, have been altogether silent, had

they not been the same persons whom he meant by bishops. Theodoret, in his notes on Acts xi, 30, says that the bishop or elder whom St. Paul characterizes, was a presbyter, who was then indifferently called either bishop or presbyter; while at the same time those who were afterward called bishops, were then usually styled apostles."*

In his epistle to Titus, St. Paul again introduces the subject. And after appointing him to ordain elders in every city, that the things which were wanting might be set in order, he adds, "For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God," Titus i, 7. It is plain from hence that, in the view of the apostle, bishops and elders, or presbyters, must have been considered as of the same order; otherwise instead of saying a bishop must be blameless, he would undoubtedly have said an elder or presbyter must be blameless, for in the preceding verses he had been speaking of the ordination of elders, and not of bishops. If, therefore, we suppose bishops to have been an order of men superior to presbyters, it will not be easy to reconcile his language to the dictates of common sense. If elders and bishops are a distinct order of men, I shall not admire the reasoning powers of that man who would argue in the following manner: "Ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee, if any be blameless, &c.; for a bishop must be blameless." Here all connection is broken off between the premises and the conclusion. And yet in this way we must suppose the Apostle Paul to have argued in the first chapter of his Epistle to Titus. But if, on the contrary, we allow bishops and elders to be of the same order, then all the parts of his argument are harmonious and consistent.

But, above all, the following passage, given by St. Paul in charge to Timothy, seems to place this point beyond all reasonable dispute: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," 1 Tim. iv, 14. "This place," says Mr. Whitaker against Bellarmine, "serves our purpose mightily; for from hence

* Ibid. p. 75.

we understand that Timothy had hands laid upon him by presbyters, who at that time governed the church by a common council. Whereupon he falls upon Bellarmine, and the Romanists, for denying the authority of ordaining to presbyters, and confining it to bishops." Thus much is plain, that whether they were apostles, evangelists, or bishops, who were concerned in the ordination of Timothy, they all assumed the character of presbyters, and acted accordingly. And although some who, in modern days, think themselves of a more exalted order, may be unwilling to allow the propriety of any inference drawn from the ordination of Timothy, in favour of the authority of presbyters, such reluctance, instead of arguing the weakness of these inferences, gives an additional brilliancy to the features of truth. And it can scarcely be deemed a breach of charity to assert that, if the apostle had said "with the laying on of the hands of the episcopate," instead of "the presbytery," the authority of his office and the weight of his argument would have been combined in all their force, and a triumphant conclusion would have been drawn from the passage, for appropriating the right of ordination exclusively to the bishops.

Regardless of these arguments, of which only a small specimen is given, to prove that the order and authority of presbyters and bishops was primarily the same, a pious prelate of this country assumed an opposite position. And in reference to the ordination of Dr. Coke by Mr. Wesley, he observes that, "if a presbyter can ordain a bishop, then the greater is blessed of the less;" thus evidently assuming, as a fact, the very point that requires proof; namely, that a bishop is of an order superior to a presbyter. And no doubt, if this fact could be substantiated, that the argument would be conclusive against the ordination in question. But until this be done, the argument can amount to nothing. Mr. Wesley's biographers, therefore, justly remark that the prelate should have overturned Mr. Wesley's position, namely, that "bishops and presbyters are of the same order," to have established his own.

But setting wholly aside all the arguments which both reason and revelation supply, and granting, as a

consequence of this concession, that bishops are of a distinct order from presbyters, and superior to them, we must then allow that their authority must have been transmitted through a distinct medium, although it was derived from one common source. But no distinct medium can possibly be supposed to be adequate, unless it be superior to the order of presbyters: and none above these can be conceived to be possible, unless it be an uninterrupted line of bishops, extending back to the days of the apostles. A denial, therefore, of the validity of ordination by presbyters, involves the necessity of apostolical succession, and of this we can find but a very poor account.

Eusebius, who to us is the first spring of ecclesiastical history, after the Acts of the Apostles, tells us, in the very beginning of his narrative, that one thing he primarily had in his eye was to give us an account of the apostolical succession. But, lest we should raise our expectations too high, he very fairly informs us that this was a new work, where he could trace no footsteps of others going before him, except in a few particular narratives. This was honest. And if, after this fair warning, we place an implicit confidence in the accounts which he gives from the reports of others, we have more reason to accuse ourselves with being self-deceivers than to charge him with imposition.

As to the apostles, he informs us that all the accounts he can procure, say that they went about the world publishing the Christian faith. He adds that it was *reported* by his predecessors that Thomas had Parthia; that Andrew had Scythia; that John had Asia; that it was *likely* that Peter preached to the Jews dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, and Cappadocia; and that Paul preached from Jerusalem around about unto Illyricum. This account is certainly very far from being satisfactory. He does not even pretend to tell us where they preached, nor even to know the methods which they adopted to settle the various churches which they planted. Bishop Stillingfleet assigns some weighty reasons to induce a belief that their actions, in these respects, were far from being uniform, but that they varied their methods according to the manners and cir-

cumstances of the people to whom they preached. What room, then, was there for the triumphant contempt which was poured upon Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke, respecting the ordination of the latter by the former, when, according to Eusebius, our only guide, we know scarcely any thing more concerning the travels and manners of the apostles themselves than we gather from the sacred records.

But for this deficiency it may, perhaps, be expected that the historian will make an ample compensation when he proceeds to give us an account of their immediate successors and followers. But in this instance also, as well as in many others, disappointment travels in the rear of hope, and even damps our expectation by its shadow. "Who they were," says Eusebius, "that, imitating these apostles, (meaning Peter and Paul,) were by them thought worthy to govern the churches which they planted, is no easy thing to tell, excepting such as may be collected from St. Paul's own words."*

On this remarkable passage bishop Stillingfleet makes the following observations :—"If the successors of the apostles, by the confession of Eusebius, are not certainly to be discovered, then what becomes of that unquestionable line of succession of the bishops of several churches, and the large diagrams made of the apostolical churches, with every one's name set down in his order, as if the writer had been *Clarencieux* to the apostles themselves? Are all the great outcries of apostolical tradition, of personal succession, of unquestionable records, resolved at last into the Scripture itself, by him from whom all these long pedigrees are fetched? Then let succession know its place; and learn to vaile Bonnet to the Scriptures; and, withal, let men take heed of overreaching themselves when they would bring down so large a catalogue of single bishops from the first and purest times of the church, for it will be hard for others to believe them when Eusebius professeth it is so hard to find them."†

"Would it not," says Calamy, "tempt a man to

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist., lib. iii, cap. 4.
† Stillingfleet's Irenic. p., 297.

wonder, after all this, to find such a stir made about the tables of succession in the several churches from the time of the apostles as a proof that diocesan episcopacy had its rise from them? Alas! the head of the Nile is not more obscure than the first part of these tables."*

"To show," the same author adds in another place, "how little ground there is to depend upon them in the present case, I will give a brief view from the representation of the ancients of the strange confusion of the first part of the tables of the three most celebrated churches of *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and *Rome*."

The church of Alexandria has been generally represented as founded by St. Mark; and yet Eusebius speaks of it but as an uncertain report. "They say it was so," but he does not tell us who said so, nor upon what grounds. However, upon this slender authority of "*they say so*," many others after him have ventured to affirm it was an indisputable fact, that St. Mark was actually the founder of this church. However, even in this there is no perfect agreement. Some contend that he was there with St. Peter; others that he was there alone, being sent by St. Peter; others that he was there only once; and others that he returned again after his first visit. As to the time of his arrival, the period of his ministry, and the year in which this church was first founded, all its records are totally silent; and the famous Clement, from whom we might expect some information, throws not a single ray of light upon this subject.

But even supposing St. Mark, under all these disadvantages, to have been seated in this church on his throne of polished ivory, as the fabulous legends report, and that he wrote his gospel in it, the difficulties will increase when we proceed to his successors. His immediate follower on "the throne of ivory" has several names given to him, and as to those who come after, the representations and accounts are too various and conflicting to be credited as records of a fact.

The line of succession which proceeds from Antioch,

* Calamy, vol. i, p. 162.

is involved in equal, if not still greater difficulties than that of Alexandria. Eusebius, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, pope Leo, Innocent, Gelasius, and Gregory the Great, all tell us that this church was founded by St. Peter. But we learn from superior authority that "they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution of Stephen travelled as far as Antioch, preaching the word to the Jews only," Acts xi, 19. This seems to have been the occasion of introducing Christianity into Antioch. After this, as the converts needed some one to confirm them in the faith which they had newly embraced, the church at Jerusalem sent forth Barnabas, not Peter, that he should go as far as Antioch. And when Barnabas found that he needed some farther assistance, instead of applying to Peter, he "departed to Tarsus to seek Saul; and when he had found him he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch," Acts xi, 25, 26. In all these transactions we have not one word about Peter; but, on the contrary, the intimations appear strongly in favour of Paul, as the first founder of the church in this place.

We read, indeed, in another place, that St. Peter was at Antioch, but the circumstance is not mentioned to his honour. For St. Paul, observing the offence he had given by his dissimulation, withstood him to the face, which we can hardly suppose he would have done, if Peter had been the founder of the church, and if he now stood at the head of his own diocess.

Baronius, indeed, aware of these difficulties, is very willing that St. Peter should resign his bishopric at Antioch, upon condition that St. Paul, acting as his vicar, be allowed to have erected one there by his authority. But even this will not do; neither can the supposition be reconciled with the positive declarations of those who assert that he was a long time bishop there.

If we turn from the apostles to their successors in this church, we shall find ourselves equally destitute of firm footing. Baronius assures us that the apostles left two bishops behind them in this place, one for the Jews,

and the other for the Gentiles. These were Ignatius and Euodius. Eusebius says expressly, that Euodius was the first bishop of Antioch, and that Ignatius succeeded him. But, on the contrary, St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, and the author of the Constitutions declare, with equal assurance, that St. Peter and St. Paul both laid their hands on Ignatius; but unfortunately it appears that St. Peter was dead before Ignatius was bishop in this place.

The settlement of the Church of Rome, and its much extolled apostolical succession of bishops, is involved, if possible, in still greater perplexity, confusion, and disorder. According to some, this church was founded by St. Peter; others say it was by St. Paul; some introduce both, and others assert it was neither. Of this latter opinion were the learned Salmasius and others. But let us allow that St. Peter actually was at Rome, of what advantage will this be to the succession of bishops? If Peter was there, it is equally certain that St. Paul was there also; and under these circumstances it will be hard to determine who was bishop. St. Paul was there first, and on this account he is preferred by many of the ancients to St. Peter; and in the seal of that church the former is placed on the right hand, and the latter on the left. But still this does not determine who was bishop. To accommodate this business, they have agreed to make them both bishops; and this unhappily destroys the unity of the episcopate by placing two supremes at the same time in the same church.

But whatever uncertainty may accompany the question as to the first bishop, those who succeed him are known with even less assurance. On this point the ancients and the moderns are strongly divided. Some will have Cletus expunged out of the table, as being the same with Anacletus; and thus, fixing Linus at the head of the succession, cause him to be followed by Anacletus and Clemens. In this manner Irenæus represents the case. Others will have Cletus and Anacletus to be both retained as distinct bishops, having Linus standing between them. At the same time in some of the ancient catalogues Anacletus is excluded; and what is remarkable, he is not to be found at this day in the canon of

the mass. And yet, in the Roman Martyrology, both Cletus and Anacletus are distinctly mentioned, and a different account is given of the birth, pontificate, and martyrdom of each.

In the catalogue of Epiphanius, the early bishops of Rome are placed in the following order:—Peter and Paul, Linus, Cletus, Clemens, and Euaristus. But in the catalogue of Bucher they stand according to the following arrangement:—Linus, Cletus, Clemens, and Euaristus; and three names are entirely omitted; namely, Anicetus, Eleutherius, and Zephyrinus. And what shall we do with the famous Clement? Does he style himself bishop of Rome? Or how came he to forget his title?

It has been said by some that after he had been St. Paul's companion, and was chosen by Peter to be bishop of Rome, he gave place to Linus. But others assert, with equal confidence, and perhaps with equal authority, that Linus and Clemens, and others, that Linus and Cletus, were bishops at the same time. Tertullian, Ruffinus, and some others place Clement next to St. Peter; but Irenæus and Eusebius set Anacletus before him; and Optatus makes both Anacletus and Cletus to precede him. And, finally, as though these strenuous defenders of apostolical succession were destined to render it ridiculous by the various methods they have adopted to defend this tender string, Austin, Damasus, and others will not allow him to grace the list until the names of Anacletus, Cletus, and Linus, have appeared. Such is the foundation of apostolical succession in the church of Rome! Surely it can be no breach of charity to assert that

'The bold impostor
Looks not more silly when the cheat's found out.'

It was not, therefore, without reason that Bishop Stillingfleet observed, "The succession here is as muddy as the Tiber itself; and if the line fails us here, we have little cause to pin our faith upon it, as to the certainty of any particular form of church government, which can be drawn from the help of the records of the primitive

church."* It cannot, therefore, but be evident to every unprejudiced mind that, since such confusion and disorder appear in the front of these tables of succession, where we might most naturally expect the greatest regularity and certainty, no dependence can be placed on their authority.

That the pretences to apostolical succession and apostolical tradition, which the great defenders of episcopal authority make, are very bold and high-sounding, cannot be easily denied. And when they come forward, supported by a long list of succession that is too sacred to be touched by vulgar hands, because the line professedly reaches to the venerable churches of Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome, the mind is dazzled with the glaring meteor. But when the civil power withdraws its coercive support, and, as in this country, exposes the question to a free investigation, the imaginary rock sinks under us, and the chain crumbles into dust.

Placing these tables of succession in the most favourable light, it cannot be denied that Eusebius is the principal, and almost the only author, on whom their credit depends: and from him we have already seen the sandy foundation on which the edifice is raised. In his account of the succession in the several churches, the whole appears to be made up chiefly from conjectures at a distance of three hundred years from the apostolical times, and even these conjectures are founded on very dubious authority. The veracity of Eusebius is not to be questioned, so far as he was able to procure information. Of this fact he has given to the world a convincing testimony by leaving vacancies even in his conjectural lists when he had no light to guide him through the gloomy labyrinth during the first ages of the church. His successors, however, have certainly been either more bold or more successful in their labours. For certain it is, that Nicephorus, Callistus, and Simeon the Metaphrast, and other such "*historical tinkers*," as Bishop Stillingfleet pleasantly calls them, have taken great care to fill all the vacancies which Eusebius had left, so that the tables are now presented to the world as quite complete.

It therefore finally appears, from the whole of this

* Irenic., p. 312.

apparent digression, that he who from the confused, mutilated, and mended tables of succession which have been transmitted to us in the records of antiquity, can infer the necessity of episcopal ordination, and the invalidity of all besides, must either have a great share of credulity, or a predominant fancy.*

Among the advocates for apostolical succession which this country boasts in modern times, Bishop Hoadly may be considered as standing in the foremost rank. But although an avowed enemy to nonconformity, he had too much magnanimity, candour, and good understanding to take his stand on this delusive and defenceless ground. He allows the truth of St. Jerome's statement, that the presbyters of Alexandria elected their own bishops for two hundred years, which was from the supposed days of St. Mark to those of Dionysius. He argues, indeed, that from the days of the apostles it was the universal custon of the church to establish a superior officer, and to invest him with extraordinary power, to whom the term bishop was applied by way of eminence. But he nowhere considers these as an order of men abstractedly independent of those from whom they derived their authority. On the contrary, he hesitates not to make this public declaration :—"I think not an uninterrupted line of succession of regularly ordained bishops necessary."† This is a concession which many of his colleagues would feel some delicacy in making; but from so able a reasoner what less would be expected? If the uninterrupted succession were asserted to be necessary, it must then be incumbent on its advocates to make it out; and then, to fail in this, would be to abandon the cause altogether. But, from the view we have already taken of this subject, we may perceive that this must be a work of no common difficulty; and all who have undertaken it have failed in the attempt, and by their failure have discovered, with additional evidence,

* See Calamy's Defence of moderate Nonconformity, vol. i, pp. 163--174. See also, Dr. Cave's Lives of the Fathers, and his Primitive Christianity, chap. viii, together with the various authorities to which they respectively refer.

† Hoadly's Treatise on Conformity and Episcopacy, p. 489.

the extent and danger of those quicksands in which so many have been overwhelmed. It appears, therefore, even from the concession of Bishop Hoadly, which both candour and prudence compelled him to make, that the conduct of Mr. Wesley in the ordination of Dr. Coke was rather a deviation from long established usage and modern practice, than from the manners of the primitive churches. And we cannot but remain astonished when we reflect on that spirit by which those opposers were actuated while pouring upon them that torrent of execration which now adds a freshness to the laurels which they wear.

But how fatal soever the preceding arguments, authorities, and concessions may appear to the infallibility of apostolical succession, it was not from these, either exclusively or primarily, that Mr. Wesley derived his support in the measures which he pursued. In every step he invariably endeavoured to take the conduct of the primitive churches for his guide. This is a fact which all his friends are ready to admit, and which none of his foes are prepared to disapprove. It was upon this principle that he endeavoured to establish his societies, to provide for their internal government, and to regulate the proceedings of those preachers who acted in conjunction with him. His knowledge of ancient ecclesiastical history was extensive; this, therefore, enabled him to draw from the fountain head; and it was only from discovering in the writings of Lord King, a faithful condensation of the manners of the ancient Christians for the first three hundred years, founded upon an accurate knowledge and a comprehensive survey of their proceedings, that he confessed his obligations to that writer.

From a dispassionate survey of all the preceding accounts it plainly appears that, in the various steps which Mr. Wesley took in the formation of his societies, and in his laying hands on Dr. Coke, he uniformly imitated the conduct of the primitive Christian churches, so far as the circumstances in which he was placed would allow. And in such cases as he deviated from this rule he was driven by an alternative, either of acting as he

acted, or of omitting altogether the adoption of measures which God has been pleased to bless in a most unexampled manner.*

CHAPTER VI.

Dr. Coke sails to America—Prominent particulars of the voyage—manner in which he employed his time—Favourable reception on his arrival—First interview with Mr. Asbury—Vicissitudes in traversing the states—Transactions at the first conference at Baltimore—Sermon at the conference noticed—Observations on some strictures made on it—Conduct of Dr. Coke vindicated respecting his sermon—Occasion of an address to General Washington—This address closely connected with the welfare of Methodism in the United States—Necessity of the measure—General Washington's reply.

Dr. Coke, being strongly fortified with the arguments and authorities which we have transiently surveyed, remained in Bristol until the vessel was ready in which himself and his colleagues were prepared to sail. Every thing being in order, he went on board, in company with Mr. Whatcoat and Mr. Vasey, amid the prayers and ardent wishes of the societies, that God would give them a safe and speedy voyage, and ultimately crown their undertaking with his blessing.

The vessel on board of which they embarked was bound for New-York, and neither the company nor the accommodations were disagreeable. A favourable breeze springing up, they weighed anchor on Saturday, the 18th of September, 1784, and began their voyage with a strong confidence in the protecting care of that God who can direct the elements, and make both winds and seas subservient to his own purposes.

* It is but just to the general body of European Methodists to state explicitly that the measures which Mr. Wesley adopted on this occasion were limited in their operation to America. On the plan which was formed for the Methodists in the western continent, the English Methodists have never acted; they are therefore not responsible for the arguments by which its propriety in a foreign country has been defended, under a train of peculiar circumstances, in the preceding pages.

On Sunday, the 19th, it was their intention to deliver two sermons to the sailors and company on board; but being unaccustomed to the sea, the motion of the ship created such a degree of sickness that the only duty they found themselves able to perform was that of casting their care upon God.

On Monday, the 20th, the wind and tide had so far operated in their favour, that they had proceeded nearly one hundred leagues from Bristol, although they had not advanced altogether so far toward the port of their destination.

On the three following days they were obliged to contend with adverse gales, which blew with such violence as to require the constant exertion of nearly all the seamen, and finally to bring them much nearer to Bristol when the storm subsided on Thursday evening, than they were on the preceding Monday.

On Friday, the 24th, both the tempest and their sickness abated. The wind also became favourable, and their appetites returned; and, in a state of external and internal tranquillity, they found themselves gently wafted toward America, at the rate of four or five miles an hour.

On Saturday, the 25th, they had accomplished one hundred and fifty leagues of their voyage; but hitherto, through sickness and tempestuous weather, they had been prevented from bearing any public testimony for God. A favourable opportunity, however, soon presented itself, as one of the sailors was dangerously ill, and confined to his bed in the steerage. On visiting this man they took occasion to describe the nature of sin, to enforce the necessity of conversion, and to direct him to behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. And although nothing was said to any of the other sailors in a direct manner, they listened with much attention, and behaved with the greatest propriety. And it is not improbable that they felt themselves more deeply interested in the truths which they heard on this solemn occasion, while the evidences of mortality appeared so conspicuously before them in one of their afflicted companions, than they would have been by any direct address that could have been delivered to them.

Against swearing and drunkenness, the prevailing vices of sailors, the captain had decidedly set his face, both by his example and his precepts; but these were insufficient to produce the desired effect. Such, however, was the respect which they entertained for Dr. Coke and his associates, that, from the time they began to visit their sick companion, scarcely an oath was ever afterward uttered in their presence while they were on board.

These favourable circumstances, which occurred on Saturday, prepared the way for them to introduce preaching on Sunday 26th. Dr. Coke accordingly preached in the morning; but a French ship appearing with her colours hoisted, and expecting from them the same compliment, greatly interrupted their service. But in the afternoon, having no impediments, both captain and sailors gave deep attention, and conducted themselves with the utmost decorum.

On Monday 27th, the winds were contrary, but not violent; so that although their progress was retarded, their peace was not interrupted. The exercise of patience was indeed necessary, and they experienced a calm resignation to the will of God.

On Tuesday 28th, the weather continued much the same as on the preceding day; and although they had scarcely advanced a league toward their port during this and the two preceding days, they still found themselves about two hundred and fifty leagues from Bristol. And as they were now so accustomed to the motion of the ship, that their sickness was gone, and a regular mode of living was established, they set apart a given hour every morning for social prayer. To these prayer meetings the sailors regularly resorted, and, unless prevented by the duties of the ship, they persevered in this practice during the remaining part of the voyage.

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, nothing remarkable occurred. The winds had been rather unfavourable, but the weather was fine, and with patience and resignation their time passed pleasantly away.

On Saturday, October 2d, a brisk gale set in from the east, and carried them onward with more than common rapidity, so that on the whole they found themselves

about three hundred and fifty leagues from Bristol, under an auspicious gale that wafted them in a direct line toward their desired haven.

On Sunday 3d, divine service was again performed both in the morning and in the afternoon; and the same degree of attention was paid by the sailors that had marked their former conduct.

On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, nothing remarkable happened. The gale became less flattering, but still it continued to propel them forward, although the weather was now grown variable.

On Thursday 7th, as the morning brought with it a perfect calm, the captain directed all the sails to be set. This was done accordingly; and, during the whole forenoon, without any anticipation of approaching danger, they waited for an auspicious breeze. But about noon a sudden squall attacked the vessel with all her canvass spread, in consequence of which she was laid down, and it was with the utmost difficulty they could prevent the mainmast from being snapped in two. During these moments of alarm and danger all was hurry and confusion; but so far had the minds of the sailors been impressed with the solemnities of religion, that the mate observed to Dr. Coke, "not an oath was to be heard among the sailors during the squall and the bustle to which it immediately led."

Several days succeeded to this, without bringing any remarkable occurrence. To morning and evening prayer the sailors were induced to attend, and their behaviour was uniformly decent. Every Sunday their seasons of public worship were regular, and the means of grace were also diligently attended. But although an outward reformation was visible in the language of the sailors, there was but little reason to believe that divine grace had made any deep impression on any of their hearts.

They had now made so considerable a progress in their voyage, that instead of calculating the distance they had sailed from Bristol, they began to anticipate their approximation to the continent. In the expectation of their speedy arrival in sight of land, they were confirmed on Friday 22d, by a sparrow which paid them a

visit. The intimation which it gave was not delusive, although they were not permitted to reach the shore so early as they expected. Among the sailors they now thought that one was given to them as a seal to their ministry; but as they were about to remove, they had no opportunity of observing that infallible characteristic of the Christian, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

On Sunday 24th, expecting it would be the last time of public worship, they preached their farewell sermons, and gave their final admonitions. To these the seamen listened with apparently more attention than they had ever manifested before; and none among them seemed displeased with the simple truths which were delivered without any disguise. Another week, however, elapsed before they could get on shore; so that, on the following Sunday, they were enabled once more to warn the sailors to flee from the wrath to come. On this occasion all behaved with the utmost decorum, and appeared like men who began to believe they had an interest in eternity. But beyond this it is difficult to say what effect the word preached had upon their minds. It is, however, the duty of gospel ministers to be instant in season, and out of season; and, having used with conscious sincerity the means which God has appointed, to leave the event to him. It was upon this principle that Dr. Coke and his companions acted during their voyage, which terminated on the 3d of November, on which day they landed at New-York.

The leisure portions of time which this passage across the Atlantic afforded, were employed by Dr. Coke chiefly in perusing such books as related to his present undertaking, and to the important occasion for which he had left his native land. In the lives of Francis Xavier and David Brainerd, he beheld an employment similar almost to this in which he was personally engaged; and the breathings of his soul appear to have been for a spirit which, like the spirits of those holy men, should be filled with humility, with self-denial, with patience, with perseverance, and with an inextinguishable zeal for the glory of God. In prayer, and in the meditations of St. Austin, he found many spiritual bless-

ings, and much consolation. Bishop Hoadly's Trea tises on Conformity and Episcopacy, though consisting of five hundred and sixty-six pages, passed also under his review; but, although he admits that the bishop is a fair and powerful reasoner, the perusal tended on the whole to confirm him in that line of duty which he was about to pursue on the western continent. In moments of relaxation, to relieve his mind from the fatigue of severer studies, the Arcadian scenes of Virgil's pen unfolded their beauties to his imagination. And even while nothing but sea, and sky, and winds was present to the senses, the magic wand of the poet introduced him to verdant meadows, to blooming groves, to bubbling fountains, to purling brooks, and to meandering streams. But even in this region of poetic fancy his soul was bent toward God: and the license taken by Virgil was cherished to illustrate the sublime expressions of David.

Arriving at New-York in perfect health, the first care of Dr. Coke, after having taken an affectionate leave of the captain and his companions on board, was to find out the Methodist preaching house. In this inquiry he was assisted by a gentleman, who, although he had no connection with the Methodists, conducted him to the house of a Mr. Sands, where he took up his abode, and found himself in a region of hospitality and friendship. The intelligence of his arrival soon brought to the house the travelling preacher stationed in that city. To him Dr. Coke unfolded the plan which Mr. Wesley had adopted for the regulation and government of his societies in America. And it was no small consolation to him to learn that the plan met his entire approbation; and so confident was he of Mr. Asbury's concurrence, that he advised him immediately to make it public throughout all the societies, being fully assured that the name of Mr. Wesley would impart a degree of sanction to the measure which would disarm resistance, even if any were to be apprehended. But that nothing might be done precipitately, Dr. Coke declined carrying the advice into execution, until he had seen Mr. Asbury, to whom he had a particular message, although they were personally unknown to each other, that they might act

in concert, and take no step that should not be the result of calm deliberation.

Having taken this prudent resolution, Dr. Coke, after preaching a few times in New-York and its vicinity, took his leave of a friendly and affectionate people, and directed his course toward Philadelphia; this being the quarter in which he expected to find Mr. Asbury. He reached that city on Saturday, the 6th of November, and was kindly entertained at the house of a Mr. Baker. On the ensuing day he preached in one of the churches, at the particular desire of a clergyman, who, in company with Dr. White, another clergyman, paid him a friendly visit, when the latter offered him the use of his church the Sunday following. In the course of this week, he waited on the governor, and was received both by him and his lady with the utmost politeness. Of this gentleman Dr. Coke speaks in his journals in terms of the warmest approbation, as a genuine friend to literature, to toleration, and to vital Christianity.

On Friday, the 12th, Dr. Coke preached at the Cross Roads, in the state of Delaware, to a pleasing and an attentive congregation. And as a proof that the people on the continent were ready to receive the gospel, he observes that, on his journey to this place, he was entertained at an inn in a most sumptuous manner, for which entertainment the proprietor absolutely refused to receive the smallest remuneration, esteeming it an honour to receive an ambassador for Jesus into his house. The day following furnished an evidence not less striking in the conduct of a Mr. Basset, one of the executive council for the state of Delaware. This gentleman, at whose house Dr. Coke was kindly entertained, though not a member of the Methodist connection, was at that time erecting a large chapel at his own expense for the accommodation of the preachers, the congregation, and the society. At this place Dr. Coke had his first interview with Mr. Freeborn Garretson, of whose life an interesting memoir is published in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1794. He was at this time a young man, and Dr. Coke describes him as full of meekness, activity, and love; and as seizing every moment to redeem the time, and to render him-

self useful in the church of God; and even as setting an example to those who were farther advanced in years.

Hitherto Dr. Coke had not seen Mr. Asbury, with whom he was solicitous to become acquainted; but the moment was at hand that should introduce them to each other. On Sunday, the 14th, the doctor proceeded from the house of Mr. Basset to a chapel built in the midst of a vast forest, in which an unexpected concourse of people assembled from every quarter. To this congregation he preached, and afterward administered the sacrament to between five and six hundred communicants. Scarcely, however, had he finished his sermon, before he perceived a plainly dressed, robust, but venerable looking man moving through the congregation, and making his way toward him. On ascending the pulpit, he clasped the doctor in his arms; and, without making himself known by words, accosted him with the holy salutation of primitive Christianity. This venerable man was Mr. Asbury; and their joy at meeting soon became mutual, while the scene was at once interesting and affecting to the congregation.

On leaving the chapel they repaired together to the house of a hospitable friend who had anticipated their interview on their arrival. Here they took into consideration the plan which Mr. Wesley had devised for the government and discipline of the societies in America, and concerted measures for carrying his designs more fully into execution; especially as the measures to be adopted met the full approbation of Mr. Asbury, and therefore ensured their mutual co-operation.

Previous to this day, Mr. Asbury had received some intimations of Dr. Coke's arrival; and expecting to find him at the chapel in the forest, he had informed several preachers of the circumstance, desiring them to repair to the neighbourhood, that they might be in readiness to attend, in case Dr. Coke should have any thing of importance to communicate from England. The contents of his mission being thought both highly important and deeply interesting, the preachers detained in the vicinity, by Mr. Asbury, were immediately called; and on being convened in a kind of council, they were made acquainted with the authority with which Dr. Coke

was empowered, and with the outlines of the plan with which he was intrusted. In this council it became a question, whether it would not be prudent to appoint a conference, as soon as the preachers could be informed of their intention, and collected together from the various states. In favour of this step their voices were unanimous; and nothing remained but to appoint the time, and give publicity to the notice, suspending all farther consultations until the period should arrive. It was now the 15th of November, and the day fixed for the opening of their conference was the ensuing Christmas-eve. Messengers were accordingly despatched in every direction, and every method was adopted that prudence could suggest, to circulate among the preachers a knowledge of the day on which they were expected to assemble.

Dr. Coke, during this interim, following the advice of Mr. Asbury, who was now well acquainted with the manners and dispositions of the people, and much better with the local geography of the country than himself, set out on a tour to visit the societies, and preach to the congregations which might assemble to hear. His route, thus laid out, included nearly a thousand miles. To conduct him through the pathless forests of the continent, Mr. Asbury furnished him with his black servant, whose name was Harry. This man had experienced the influence of divine grace on his heart; and had given evidence of its abiding efficacy by the humility and amiable deportment of his life. From experiencing the grace of God in his own soul, he had been led to warn his sable brethren to flee from the wrath to come; and by addressing them in their own familiar dialect, he had been made instrumental of much good among them. During this tour Dr. Coke heard him preach several times; and from that peculiar power which attended his word, he thought him, in this department, one of the best preachers that the world could furnish.

In prosecuting this journey, Dr. Coke found himself exposed to the storms and sunshine which diversify the natural and the moral world. In some places he was received as an angel of God, and was caressed and followed by the rich and powerful, and occasionally salu-

ted with the hosannas of the multitude. But on other occasions the case was totally reversed. Arriving at the town of Cambridge on Sunday, the 5th of December, a place that had been notorious for persecution, a question arose among the inhabitants whether Dr. Coke, who was admitted to be a clergyman, should be allowed to preach in their church or not. The question was finally decided against him, and the church doors were shut. It is worthy of remark, that in this church no service had been performed for several years; and, prior to Dr. Coke's arrival, it had been thrown open for the reception of cattle and hogs, although they would not suffer it to be profaned by the preaching of the gospel. But a vast concourse of people assembled at the door of a cottage, and to these he preached without interruption. At Kent Island, on the following Thursday, he was again compelled to preach in the open air, through a cause somewhat similar to the preceding. In the church of this place notice had been published on the preceding Snuday, that Dr. Coke would preach there. But when the moment came, the same individual who had announced his coming to preach in the church, through that instability which marks the weakness of human nature, ordered the doors to be shut against him. The issue here was different from what he in all probability expected. A large congregation assembled, and heard attentively; and even those who had been no previous friends to Methodism espoused its cause on the present occasion, through the indignant feelings which the treatment of Dr. Coke had excited. In passing from Cambridge to this place he was exposed to imminent danger in crossing a ferry. From the violence of the weather, Harry, who was at once his companion and his guide, had anticipated the danger that awaited them; and through his persuasion Dr. Coke was prevailed upon to leave the horses to be brought forward on the ensuing day, as the river which they had to pass was scarcely fordable. This was done; and it was with the utmost difficulty that the boat, into which they entered on another part of the same stream, could reach the opposite shore. To this advice, under the superintending care of God, they were indebted for the preservation of their lives.

As no doubt had been entertained that the plan recommended by Mr. Wesley would be fully adopted at the ensuing conference, Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury had anticipated the erection of a school or college for the education of youth so soon as circumstances should concur to render the accomplishment of the plan advisable. In humble confidence of success, they had, therefore, previous to their separation, agreed to make their intention public in the course of their respective journeys, and solicit such assistance as their benevolent friends were disposed to afford. In prosecuting this plan, they found a spirit of liberality which far exceeded their most sanguine expectations. On the 14th of December they again met near Chesapeake bay; and, on comparing their sums together, discovered that they had already collected about one thousand pounds sterling; and, on the Friday following, one gentleman presented Dr. Coke with thirty guineas, furnishing both him and Mr. Asbury with elegant apartments, and every accommodation which they could wish to prepare their plans for the approaching conference.

On Christmas-eve the preachers met in the city of Baltimore, according to previous appointment, to begin their conference, at which nearly sixty were present; but the whole number at that time in the connection on the continent amounted to eighty-one. In this assembly the plans devised by Mr. Wesley, and now committed to their care for execution, were fully unfolded; and, under existing circumstances, their general principles received unanimous approbation. On the 27th of December, Dr. Coke, agreeably to the letter he had received from Mr. Wesley prior to his departure from Bristol, proceeded to impart to Mr. Asbury that branch of the office to which he was designated. The season was awful and impressive; a solemn sense of the divine presence evidently resting upon all. Mr. Asbury being thus ordained, in conjunction with Dr. Coke, superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, proceeded with him to elect a number of elders and deacons, according to the directions previously received from Mr. Wesley. To the office of deacon every other preacher in full connection was chosen; and in the

choice of presbyters or elders all partiality seemed to give place to superior considerations; namely, to qualification and character, such as might tend to promote the glory of God, and the welfare of immortal souls.

But how rigorously soever they adhered to the principle of impartiality, it was not in their power to give universal satisfaction. Many who were omitted in this list of honour felt themselves hurt, and suspected that others less qualified for the office were unduly preferred before them. But for such surmisings due allowance must always be made. They flow from the selfish principles of human nature; and, in a greater or less degree, find place in almost every breast. The discontent, however, was of a transient nature; reason soon resumed her dominion; the clouds quickly dispersed; and all was again clear and tranquil.

As the establishment of this mode of discipline and government among the Methodists in America was totally unprecedented, it became necessary to state to the assembled multitudes the foundation on which the innovation stood. This was a task which naturally devolved on Dr. Coke; and to this subject he directed the attention of his audience, in a sermon which he delivered at Baltimore, immediately after the ordination of Mr. Asbury, and the appointment of presbyters and deacons for the churches. In the course of this sermon he adverted to the arguments which we have already given in detail in the preceding chapter; and, independently of argument and reasoning, he defended the measure on the ground of necessity; and vindicated his conduct, and the conduct of his associates, from the charge of inconsistency, by making his appeal to the independence which the United States had recently acquired.

But unfortunately, in these statements, vindications, and appeals, he was less careful than could have been wished, in preserving those marks of discrimination to which all should rigidly adhere on disputable occasions. In describing the character of the clergy of America, he seemed to have forgotten that he was still an Englishman; and he introduced his observations in a manner that would seem, from his omitting, in the ardour of his zeal, the restrictive application, to imply a universal

characteristic. On the subject of an episcopal establishment, under the immediate auspices of the state, he was equally negligent in marking the peculiar situations of Great Britain and the United States: and he seemed hardly to be aware of the difficulty of vindicating the appendages of monarchy upon republican ground, or of expatiating upon the rights of independence on the continent without interfering with the regulations established in his native land. In relation to the distinct bodies of preachers on each side of the Atlantic, the same inattention was discoverable in his animadversions. And hence it was, that the language which, under restrictive epithets, and exclusive appropriation, was strictly just and proper, became liable to suspicions in other connections, and, by exposing a vulnerable front, invited assailants to an attack.

It is a fact, which the truth of personal biography, as well as that of general history, directs us to offer on the altar of impartiality, that Mr. Charles Wesley was never pleased with the powers of ordaining which he thought his brother John had unwarrantably assumed. His face was set against this branch of his conduct from the beginning; and even to the last, the only ground which, in his view, supported the propriety of the measure was the utility resulting from it. But as in all these transactions Dr. Coke had taken an active part, the situation which he sustained, and the character he had assumed, rendered him, in the estimation of Mr. Charles Wesley, a fair object of attack. Against him, therefore, he could direct all the point of his observations; and by so doing indirectly show his disapprobation, by a peculiar species of well contrived accident that should teach the javelin to fly beyond its appointed mark.

Availing himself of the favourable opportunity which certain unguarded expressions in Dr. Coke's sermon afforded, an anonymous author, on the arrival of some copies in England, published strictures upon it. Of these strictures Mr. Charles Wesley is generally supposed to have been the author; yet, for reasons which are concealed, the writer could never be induced publicly to avow his name. But from whose pen soever they proceeded, they certainly contained much point,

and furnished evidence that the author was well acquainted with his subject, and capable of taking a comprehensive survey of all its parts. Connecting the Methodism of England with that of America—the clergy at home with the clergy abroad—and viewing Dr. Coke in his complex character of a clergyman of the Church of England, a Methodist preacher and a bishop in the United States, he was presented to the public, dressed in a coat of many colours. His reply to these strictures soon followed their appearance; and in this he introduced those explanatory phrases, and local restrictions to his meaning, which ought to have guarded the expressions of his sermon when it was delivered, and which, if done, would have prevented the more pointed parts of the strictures from falling upon him.

Among other charges of less magnitude and moment, the anonymous author contends that, "As an Englishman, he condemns the constitution of his country,—as a clergyman, he vilifies his brethren with the opprobrious names of hirelings and parasites,—as a Methodist preacher, he contradicts the uniform declarations of the Rev. John and Charles Wesley,—and that from the reasons which he assigned for the adherence of the Methodists in England to the Church, he indirectly charged the preachers with acting upon principles of duplicity and falsehood."

To the first of these charges Dr. Coke replies that, instead of condemning the constitution of his country, he is fully persuaded no form of civil government can be equal to that of a mixed monarchy for the welfare of the British empire. The constitution, he contends, is superlatively excellent, although he readily allows that some of its branches are liable to be abused. It was to this abuse that he referred in his sermon; and against its effects and consequences, as they were experienced in America, that he raised his voice; and nothing beyond this, he argues, can be fairly inferred from his language.

The expression used by Dr. Coke in his sermon, on which the charge was founded, runs thus: "The Church of England, of which the society of Methodists, in general, have till lately professed themselves a part, did for

many years groan in America under grievances of the heaviest kind. Subjected to a hierarchy which weighs every thing in the scale of politics, its most important interests were repeatedly sacrificed to the supposed advantages of England." That these observations were intended by the author to be exclusively applied to the churches in America, is demonstrable from the language he has used. The abuses which existed, he invariably condemned, both in England and in America; especially as he perceived that principles were from these abuses called into action which might ultimately prove destructive to the very essence of Christianity. But the manner in which power was exercised in America, he uniformly admitted to be widely different from that which was discovered in England. Both in this country and in America the hierarchy existed; but it was only on the western side of the Atlantic that he represents the people as "groaning under grievances of the heaviest kind." In both countries the hierarchy was *liable* to abuse; but it was only in America that he describes it as actually abused. In both countries every thing *might* be "weighed in the scale of politics," but it was only in the United States that he represented the "most important interests of the people sacrificed to the supposed advantages of England." On what ground, then, it may be asked, does that charge rest, which accuses Dr. Coke with "condemning the constitution of his country?" Combined in all its parts, it was an object of his admiration; but he perceived within its range a principle which was liable to abuse; and in a distant appendage of the empire he saw that abuse actually existing in all its enormity. The fact itself has never been denied. Against this abuse he lifted his voice, and employed his pen; and therefore he stood charged with condemning the constitution of his country!

Against the second charge, that, "as a clergyman, he vilifies his brethren with the opprobrious names of hirelings and parasites," his vindication lies within a narrow compass. Dr. Coke has said that "the churches were in general filled with the parasites and bottle companions of the rich and great; and that the drunkard, the fornicator, and the extortioner triumphed over

bleeding Zion, because they were faithful abetters of the ruling powers." To prevent, if possible, any one from thinking that he intended to apply these passages so indiscriminately as to involve the English clergy, he had subjoined a note at the foot of his page. But this note was insufficient to protect him from a charge of vilifying his brethren. In his vindication he utterly denies that the American clergy were his brethren. That they were, in general, as wretched a set of men as ever disgraced the church of God, he boldly asserts; although he admits that several might be found among them at whose feet he should think it an honour to sit. But, on the whole, he contends that the clergy of the Church of England were incomparably to be preferred before the clergy in America, adverted to in his sermon. It does not appear that Dr. Coke on this occasion stands charged with having uttered falsehoods, or with having given even distorted features to truth. In what respect, then, it may be asked, has he vilified his brethren? His crime must consist in having given publicity to vices which previously existed, and with having had courage to drag the traitors to light.

To the third charge, "that, as a Methodist preacher, he contradicts the uniform declaration of J. and C. Wesley, respecting their adherence to the church," he replies that he did nothing but by a delegated power which he received from Mr. Wesley. And for the truth of this he refers to Mr. Wesley's letter addressed to himself and to Mr. Asbury, which, he contends, is a sufficient vindication for himself against the charge of inconsistency as a Methodist. On this ground it cannot be denied that his plea of delegated authority is valid, Mr. Wesley and himself being identified together. The foundation of this authority has been already examined.

Against the last charge, founded upon the reasons which Dr. Coke had assigned for the adherence of the Methodists in England to the Church, as being the only alternative that could preserve the societies, and prevent them from forming themselves into an independent body; his defence will arise from the distinct grounds on which the English and the American Methodists respectively

stood. In America they had no national establishment after the war, to which they could possibly adhere; and consequently all arguments and reasonings, on what principle soever they were founded, must be alike nugatory, because totally inapplicable. Nor can the reasons assigned by Dr. Coke for the adherence of the Methodists in England to the Church, support the charge brought against him in the strictures. If these reasons had included all that could be urged in behalf of the preachers, for exhorting the people to adhere to the Church, the pretence for accusing him with insinuations to their disadvantage would have been apparent. But these were not the *only* reasons; they were not the principal ones; they were only such as occurred on the present occasion, and were unfortunately insufficient for his purpose. He assigned *some;* but he did not assign *all;* he did not assign the strongest; nor was he bound to enter into a detail of those arguments in America, which can only be of force on this side of the water. His reasonings and arguments were therefore defective rather than erroneous; and demanded compassion instead of blame, if more were necessary to be said. If, indeed, the doctor had stated the reasons assigned, as the *only ones* why the Methodists in England were exhorted to adhere to the Church, he would have merited the censures bestowed upon him in the strictures; and in addition to this, he would have exposed himself to the charge of not keeping within the pale of truth. But as the case really stood, the ground on which he took his stand was strictly tenable; and a fair understanding of his meaning, taken in connection with the object that he had in view, will strip him of that coat of many colours in which the anonymous author of the strictures was anxious to see him arrayed.

But it was not from any sentiment advanced, either in his sermon, or in the strictures upon it, that Dr. Coke found the most formidable difficulty he was doomed to encounter, in consequence of his visit to America. The official situation he filled, imposed upon him several duties which it was incumbent on him to discharge; but which, as a subject of Great Britain, involved him in much perplexity. Of this description was the address

presented by Mr. Asbury and himself to General Washington, the president of the United States.

In every department of life there are circumstances which will sometimes occur, to place men in dilemmas that they can discover with more ease than they can avoid. As independent spectators, it is not difficult for us to discern the whirlpool or the rocks which await an actor in public life; and in the same moment we may insult him with the sighs of affected pity, and the smiles of malignant joy. But it is not so easy to determine how we should have acted, if in similar situations we had been appointed to walk in an untrodden path.

It is well known, from the whole tenor of Mr. Wesley's political observations, that in the unhappy contest between Great Britain and America he very warmly espoused the cause of England, and reprobated the conduct of the colonists. This circumstance placed the Methodists in a very unfavourable light in the eyes of the Americans; in consequence of which all the English preachers, except Mr. Asbury, were obliged to flee as soon as the war broke out. The contest was, indeed, now brought to an issue, and the United States were acknowledged by the powers of Europe as an independent empire. But although the tempest had subsided, the agitation which it occasioned still continued, and the waves were occasionally heard to beat upon the shore. The suspicions, therefore, which the Methodists had incurred, it was incumbent on them to wipe away.

Prior to this time the case of negro slavery had excited much attention in England; and this unhappy race of men had found many powerful friends among the wise and good of every denomination. Mr. Wesley and most of his preachers had lifted their voices in favour of the oppressed; and had inveighed in general terms against the conduct of those traders

> "Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge and span,
> And buy the muscles and the bones of man."

Their voices had been heard across the Atlantic; and the sentiments they entertained vibrated in discordant notes on the ears of the American planters, who had strangely learned to sign with one hand an act of

independence in their own behalf, while, with the other, they brandished the whip over their trembling slaves.

The question on the justice or injustice of holding slaves had no necessary connection with the mode of civil government established in the colonies. Slave-holding was tolerated and sanctioned; but it was not enforced. A man, therefore, might be attached to the constitution in the abstract, and admire it on all other occasions, and yet be a decided foe to that gross inhumanity which its strangely lenient principles tolerated. This was precisely the ground on which multitudes of the American Methodists stood. But the friends of slavery, unable to defend the traffic, and unwilling to see its enormity exposed, endeavoured to connect slave-holding with the constitution of their country, and to transfer the abhorrence which slavery had excited, to the score of disaffection toward the government. This was an artificial link which it was the duty of Dr. Coke to expose and snap asunder.

As the revolution which had taken place formed an entirely new era in the history of American transactions, the citizens thought it their duty to rally around the infant government, and to express their approbation of the principles which had been adopted. Among these citizens, as the principles established by government preserved the rights of conscience free from violation, the different religious sects presented their addresses respectively to the amiable president, General Washington; professing their readiness to yield obedience to the system of government which had been recently established, end declaring their abhorrence of every attempt to effect its subversion.

Amid these examples, and under the peculiar circumstances in which the Methodists were placed, it was scarcely possible for them to avoid making a similar acknowledgment without incurring the vengeance of their foes, who would triumphantly have construed their silence into confirmed disloyalty. Under this reproachful imputation they must have remained; nor would it have been in their power to remove the stigma, but by having recourse hereafter to an address as a doubtful

remedy, which might now be presented as a sure preventive.

Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, having assumed the character of bishops, were, in the eyes of all, the acknowledged head of the American Methodists; and consequently no address could be considered as official unless it bore their signatures as the organ of the body. Thus circumstanced, an address was drawn up, and signed by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury in behalf of the American Methodists, and presented to General Washington. In this address they professed their loyalty and obedience, and their readiness to support, on all lawful occasions, the executive government now established; and, as a religious body, to present their prayers to almighty God for his blessing on the country and its rulers. But although this address contained nothing more than is usually expressed on such occasions, it brought Dr. Coke into some serious difficulties among his brethren at home, on his return to England, as we shall hereafter discover.

Whether Dr. Coke, when this address was drawn up, signed, and presented to General Washington, had forgotten that he was a subject of Great Britain, (for it was from this circumstance that his future difficulties arose,) it is unnecessary to inquire. Even admitting that he knew it, and that he felt the delicacy of his situation in all its force, as a friend to the cause of God, it was not in his power to avoid the line of conduct which he pursued. So far as the agency of secondary causes is concerned, the final destiny of Methodism in America seemed to rest on this address. And from his invincible attachment to the interests of the gospel, no one who knew his real character will doubt that, with the perfect knowledge of all that censure and contempt which he was doomed to endure on a future day, he would, if it were possible, again prefer putting his signature to the address, to the mean complacency which pride might draw from the omission, in order to preserve a uniformity of action.

In the present disordered state of the world we frequently perceive, both in nature and in providence, that the claims of diminutive parts must be sometimes aban-

doned, in order to be made subservient to the perfection of the whole. In the actions of human beings the same principle occasionally operates; and the individual who tenaciously adheres to the utmost local benefits of which his exclusive condition renders him susceptible, deprives the community of a greater good than he himself retains by such an illiberal self-appropriation.

It was in one of these situations that Dr. Coke was placed while about to sign the address in America. He had both a private and a public consistency of character to sustain. But no effort of human ingenuity could make them mutually coincide. As a subject of Great Britain, tenacious of the consistency of his personal actions, prudence would have directed him not to sign. But as a minister of Jesus Christ, as filling an official station in the Methodist societies, and as a superintendent in America, the welfare of the gospel commanded him to promote its interests, and to leave all private considerations, as unworthy of bearing the name of rival. Between these alternatives he made a noble choice, and acted upon an exalted principle, to which none but superior spirits can aspire. He has taught us by his magnanimous example that

"Private respects to public weal must yield,"

and that personal reputation was no longer his when the interests of Christianity demanded the costly sacrifice. By walking on this vast and comprehensive circle, which the organs of some were too dim to discern, he has encircled his name with wreaths of laurel, which will continue to flourish when the sigh of smiling pity, and of sneering condolence, can be no longer heard. Those who still continue to censure his conduct on the present occasion, now the mists of prejudice are done away, and all the consequences of each alternative appear in their proper bearings, plainly tell us how they would have acted under similar circumstances if, like him, they had been called to feel the touch of Ithuriel's spear.

But, whatever jealousies might have been entertained at home respecting the political tendency of this address, nothing can be more evident than that it was

viewed in its proper light in the United States. This may be gathered from the answer which it procured from General Washington; and its public effects may be inferred from the peace, the protection, the prosperity, which, from that moment to the present, the Methodist churches have continued to enjoy, under the government thus addressed in the person of the president. On the perusal of this address General Washington returned the following reply.

"To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

"GENTLEMEN,—I return to you individually, and through you to your society collectively in the United States, my thanks for the demonstrations of affection, and the expressions of joy offered in their behalf, on my late appointment. It shall be my endeavour to manifest the purity of my inclinations for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of my desires to contribute whatever may be in my power toward the civil and religious liberties of the American people. In pursuing this line of conduct, I hope, by the assistance of divine Providence, not altogether to disappoint the confidence which you have been pleased to repose in me.

"It always affords me satisfaction when I find a concurrence in sentiment and practice between all conscientious men, in acknowledgements of homage to the great Governor of the universe, and in professions of support to a just civil government. After mentioning that I trust the people of every denomination, who demean themselves as good citizens, will have occasion to be convinced that I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine vital religion—I must assure you, in particular, that I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers at the throne of grace for me, and that I likewise implore the divine benediction on yourselves and your religious community. G. WASHINGTON."

CHAPTER VII.

Analysis of the Episcopal form of church government established in America—Progress of Methodism in the United States—Dr. Coke's sermon on the Godhead of Christ—Missionaries sent to Nova Scotia through Dr. Coke's exertions—History of Cokesbury college—Rules of the institution—Destruction by fire—Church and college at Baltimore—Flourishing condition—Both consumed by fire—Aggregate loss estimated at £10,000—Dr. Coke in imminent danger of being drowned—Observations on slavery in America—Efforts to procure its abolition—Visits General Washington—Exposed to dangers in forests—Returns to England.

As the form of church government, and the manner of worship to be established in America, originated primarily with Mr. Wesley, he had abridged the form of common prayer prior to Dr. Coke's departure from Bristol, for the future use of the congregations on the continent. Dr. Coke, also, in conjunction with Mr. Asbury, published, during this visit, a small volume, containing 187 pages, respecting the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, with explanatory notes. This little volume is divided into three chapters, the first of which includes twenty-eight sections, the second ten sections, and the third six.

The first section in the first chapter contains a condensed account of the reason why the episcopal form of church government was adopted, an account of baptism, and the Lord's supper, and the foundations on which their right of establishing it rested. The second section contains the articles of religion, which are twenty-five in number; and, with some occasional variations, they very nearly coincide with those of the Established Church. The third section relates to the general and annual conferences; and in these they differ from the conferences of England chiefly in the following particulars: That the time of holding the yearly conferences, which shall be six in number, shall be solely under the direction of the bishops: that the elders shall be elected by the unanimous suffrages of the general conference: and that the districts are to be formed according to the judgment of the bishops.

The fourth section applies exclusively to the appoint-

ment, duties, and responsibility of the bishops. A bishop is to be constituted such by the general conference, and the laying on of the hands of two or three bishops; and in case of the death of all, he is to be elected by the voice of conference, and ordained by three of the elders. That it is the bishops' business to preside in the conferences; to fix the appointment of the preachers; to change, receive, or suspend preachers, during the intervals between the conferences; to travel throughout the connection at large; to inspect the temporal and spiritual concerns of the societies; and to ordain bishops, elders, and deacons.

For their own conduct respecting themselves, and for the exercise of that power which is thus reposed in them, the bishops are responsible to the conference at its general meeting. But if, during the interval of conference, a bishop be charged with immorality, three travelling elders are to call upon him, to whose examination he shall submit; and in case they think him guilty, they shall call to their aid two presiding elders from two districts in the neighbourhood, where the alleged crime was committed, each of whom shall bring with him two other elders, or one elder and a deacon. These nine persons thus assembled shall form a conference; and if, on examination, two-thirds find him guilty, he shall be suspended until the ensuing conference, when his fate shall be finally determined. A bishop who ceases from travelling without the consent of the general conference, loses, on this account, his power to exercise all ministerial functions in the church.

The fifth section comprehends the duties of the presiding elders. These are described as assistants to the bishops; to fill their places in case of their absence; and to be in a great degree under their direction. The sixth section relates to the appointment and office of the travelling elders. These are to be elected by a majority of the yearly conference, and by the laying on of the hands of a bishop and of the elders that are present. These are to administer baptism and the Lord's supper, and to perform the office of marrying, together with all the branches of divine worship. A deacon, as it is noticed in the seventh section, is described nearly as an

elder, only he is to act in subordination to him, and to supply his place in case of his absence. He must fill this office for two years, before he can be eligible to that of an elder. The eighth section refers to the manner of receiving preachers, and it describes their duties. These are nearly the same as the English conferences express. The salaries of the preachers are stipulated in the ninth: and the duties of those who have the charge of circuits in the tenth section. But neither these, nor the manner in which the candidates for the ministry are to be examined, which are included in the eleventh section, contain any thing remarkable, that deviates from the rules established in England.

The matter and manner of preaching are fully and pointedly expressed in the twelfth section; and the duty of preachers to God, to themselves, and to one another, is sketched with a masterly hand in the thirteenth; but the minutes of the British conferences lead the way, and contain the essence of all. The fourteenth section describes the causes which will justify the preachers in abandoning any place in which preaching had been previously established. The fifteenth enforces the duty of visiting the members of the society from house to house; the sixteenth that of instructing children; the seventeenth the necessity ministers are under to employ their time profitably; and the eighteenth urges the necessity of union among themselves. Under each of these sections, the branches of the various duties inculcated are marked with much precision, and are sufficiently comprehensive to ensure a discharge of the obligations incumbent on every faithful minister of Jesus Christ. But being founded upon the same principles that support the minutes of the English conferences, and embracing in the aggregate the same particulars, it will be unnecessary to give them in detail.

The nineteenth section provides for the responsibility of all the travelling preachers. If a charge be preferred against any one near the time of conference, his case is to be heard, examined, and determined on by the preachers there assembled. But in case a charge, during the intervals between the conferences, be brought, the presiding elder of the circuit shall call together as many

ministers as he may think convenient. And if, after bringing the accuser and accused face to face, the preachers thus assembled shall think him guilty, they shall have power to suspend him from all official services in the church until the ensuing conference, when his case shall be re-examined, and the result shall be a final decision. In case the accuser and the accused cannot be brought face to face, the party absenting himself shall be deemed guilty, and his sentence shall be accordingly; with this exception, that he may demand a hearing at the next conference, which shall have power either to confirm or annul the previous sentence. When a charge brought against a preacher is for erroneous doctrine, the person thus accused shall be treated the same as in cases of immorality, unless, on receiving an admonition, he solemnly engage in future neither to publish nor defend such doctrine or sentiments, either in public or in private. But under either circumstance his case shall be re-examined at the next conference.

The twentieth section relates to the provision to be made for supplying the circuits with preaching during the time of conference. To accomplish this, so many local preachers are to be engaged as may be thought necessary, or as can be procured, who are to be paid for their time, and provided for in the same proportion and manner as the travelling preachers would, whose places they fill. But where these will leave deficiencies, some of Mr. Wesley's sermons are to be read, or prayer-meetings are to be regularly introduced.

From the twenty-first section we learn that no local preacher shall presume to preach until he has first obtained the sanction of his own quarterly meeting; nor even then, unless he procure a certificate expressive of their approbation. A local preacher cannot be eligible to the office of deacon until he has officiated for four years from the date of his certificate. In case a charge be brought against any local preacher, deacon, or elder, the preacher who has the care of the circuit shall summon three or four local preachers from the neighbourhood; or, in case of their deficiency, so many leaders or exhorters as shall fill their place, who shall hear a statement of the affair. And if, on due examination,

either the whole, or a majority, shall judge him to be guilty either of immoral conduct, or of preaching false doctrine, he shall be suspended from all offices in the church until the ensuing quarterly meeting. The quarterly meeting, on hearing his affair, shall have power to acquit, to censure, to suspend, or to expel him, and shall pronounce its judgment accordingly. But in case the person thus receiving his sentence shall think himself unjustly treated, he may make his appeal to the ensuing conference, provided he give notice of such intention to the quarterly meeting, that the minutes of his trial may be preserved, and presented at the conference to which he appeals, and where he may make his personal appearance. The decision of conference shall be final.

The rite of baptism, which is noticed in the twenty-second section, leaves it at the option of every adult, and of the parents of every child, whether it shall be administered by sprinkling, by pouring, or by immersion. But in no case is the preacher to receive either a fee or a present for administering baptism, and the same prohibition extends to the burial of the dead.

The Lord's supper, which is introduced in the twenty-third section, may be administered to communicants, either sitting or standing, if they have any scruples as to the propriety of kneeling. Persons not belonging to the society may be admitted, provided they procure a recommendation from an elder or deacon. But in no case is any person to be admitted who is guilty of practices for which, if a member, he would be excluded the Methodist society.

In the exercise of public worship the twenty-fourth section directs that the morning service on Sundays shall consist of singing, of prayer, of reading one chapter from the Old Testament, and another from the New, and preaching. That the afternoon service shall be the same, with the exception of having one chapter read instead of two; and in the evening service reading is to be omitted altogether. On sacrament days reading is to be wholly omitted in the morning.

The twenty-fifth section contains several observations on the spirit and truth of singing; and recommends the practice to all the congregations, while it prohibits all

preachers from introducing hymns of their own composition. The twenty-sixth delineates a plan for raising a fund for superannuated preachers, and for the widows and children of such as are dead. The twenty-seventh points out ways and means for raising money for the propagation of the gospel; and the twenty-eighth applies to the chartered fund. But as these bear a strong resemblance to institutions established among the Methodists in this country, they require no explanation.

The second chapter, which contains ten sections, includes the rules of the Methodist societies; of class meeting; of band meeting; defines the privileges to be granted to serious persons not in society; treats of the duties and qualifications of stewards; of unlawful marriages; and of the manner of bringing to trial, finding guilty, and reproving, suspending, or excluding improper persons from society and church privileges. On each of the preceding subjects the rules are nearly the same as in England, excepting the last, which is more comprehensive; and it seems to have been regulated by the local circumstances of the country. In all cases when an accusation is brought against a member, the accuser and the accused, if it be practicable, are to be brought face to face, before the leading members of the society to which the supposed offender belongs; and when this cannot be done, the best evidence that can be procured, whether in society or not, shall be introduced. And if, on a fair examination, the offence shall appear of a gross and flagrant nature, the offending member shall be expelled. But in cases of a less heinous kind he is to be reproved. This method is to be adopted twice; but on the third offence the affair must be brought before the society, and if no marks of contrition appear, he must be excluded. In such cases, however, an appeal may be made to the next quarterly meeting, when a majority of the preachers, both travelling and local, together with the stewards and leaders present, shall finally determine the case.

As there are no excise laws in the United States, spirituous liquors are both cheap and plentiful, and the trade, in any quantities, is open and free for all. But, as a natural consequence, this liberty was frequently

abused, to the great injury of public morals. It therefore became necessary to introduce a rule respecting the sale and use of this article, so far as any member of society was concerned in the traffic. This subject is considered in the tenth section of this chapter, which contains the following resolution:—"If any member of our society retail or give spirituous liquors, and any thing disorderly be transacted under his roof on this account, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, shall proceed against him as in the case of other immoralities; and the person accused shall be cleared, censured, suspended, or excluded, according to his conduct, as on other charges of immorality."

The first section in the third chapter applies to the building of churches, the manner of settling them, and their internal regulations. But these regulations coincide nearly with those that are established in England, respecting the chapels belonging to the Methodist connection, making due allowances for the variations which local circumstances occasion.

The second section describes the manner in which the printing business is to be conducted, and how the profits arising from the books are to be applied to the promoting of the work of God, as occasions may require. But the principles of this plan are so much the same with that followed in England, that no detail of particulars can be thought necessary.

The third section developes a plan for the education of youth, recommended to be adopted in the seminaries of learning which, at this time, they intended to establish in the colleges that were in contemplation, and which were afterward erected. The same section also contains twenty-nine rules for the internal regulation of the pupils and masters, as to the employment of their time, and the improvement of their minds.

In the fourth section the doctrine of Christian perfection is stated, and recommended both to the preachers and the members of society. But for an explanation of terms—the nature of the doctrine—and the foundation on which it rests, the reader is recommended in a note to Mr. Wesley's treatise on this subject; and through this treatise to the oracles of God. In the last section

Antinomianism is introduced as a very appropriate contrast, and the cautions against this dangerous rock are such as every one must be ready to embrace, who is willing to live godly in Christ Jesus, and to seek after a qualification for heaven. For arguments against this delusive error the reader is judiciously recommended to peruse Mr. Fletcher's dissertations on this subject.

To almost all these sections Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury have added copious notes, illustrating the import and application of the various rules, and supporting them by authority derived from reason, and the conduct of the ancient churches; and above all, by an appeal to numerous passages of Scripture. To adduce these authorities, to state these reasons, and to cite these passages, would be to transcribe the book. Taken together, this little volume may, perhaps with justice, be said to contain one of the most complete bodies of ethics, that, within the same compass, can be produced in the English language. Of these ethics, the general principles are of universal application; and of these, the excellence is conspicuous to all. But of such branches as are of a local nature, it must be necessary that we obtain a knowledge of the particular circumstances from which they derive their propriety: and while these are concealed from us, prudence dictates that we should suspend our judgment until we can trace the full connection between causes and their effects, even in those particulars which seem repugnant to our feelings.

It will be readily admitted that, prior to the introduction of Methodism in its episcopal form into the United States, the work of God had assumed a prosperous appearance. In several of the states some remarkable revivals of genuine religion had taken place; so that the calamities of war appeared to have disposed the people to receive with joy the kingdom of the Prince of peace. The introduction of the episcopal form did not, however, tend to check the progress of the gospel. From this period, the societies and congregations rapidly increased; and, if the divine approbation may be inferred from the success with which God has crowned the efforts of his servants in these endeavours to promote his glory and the good of souls, we cannot but conclude

that this step has been sanctioned by him. This conclusion is supported by the following indubitable fact. At the time of this first episcopal conference held in Baltimore, at the termination of the year 1784, the members of society throughout the United States amounted to about fifteen thousand; but so rapidly had they increased during the six succeeding years that, at the time of Mr. Wesley's death, they were augmented to near seventy thousand souls.

It was at this conference that Dr. Coke delivered his well known sermon on the godhead or divinity of Christ. It was afterward published at New-York, in the month of February, 1785, at the particular request of those who heard it delivered. It has since received a very extensive circulation both in America and in England.

As an original composition Dr. Coke does not profess to send it into the world. In his prefatory remarks, he acknowledges his obligations to Mr. Hoole, to whose industry he was indebted for several leading thoughts. From mere rational argument he does not profess to have derived much support. The importance of the subject is, however, judiciously introduced; and it cannot be denied that the way is fully prepared for that accumulation of Scripture evidence which, toward the close, he has compendiously adduced, and rendered even additionally interesting by the arrangements that appear. But we must quit this subject, to survey some of the effects which were immediately connected with the termination of the American war.

It is melancholy to reflect that, when nations are grown weary of the enormities which they mutually commit in times of war, and sink down into a state of tranquillity, the return of public peace should become a signal to awaken private vengeance. The sword of war destroys its millions; but it is scarcely sheathed, before the axe of the executioner, in many instances, becomes dyed with blood. The interests and views of men are various in all the nations upon earth. And in proportion as the human mind shakes off the chains of blind submission to the dictates of custom, and contemplates the nature of equity and justice, it will acquire

a principle of independence that will raise it above the prejudices of empires, and give a new tone to its decisions and pursuits. This may occasionally involve many in error, and expose others to serious calamities. But it is not always we can either govern or conceal our attachments and aversions, although we may anticipate the consequences to which they will inevitably lead.

As the United States were originally an appendage of the British empire, when the revolution began several families were to be found that would not renounce their attachment to the English cause. These were known; but they remained without molestation to await the event of the war. The peace which acknowledged the independence of the colonies was to them a signal to remove. And to this measure they were urged by the danger of remaining in their original settlements, and allured by their attachment to the British cause, which attachment still remained unsubdued.

The loyalists, who had borne arms against the United States during the war, being proscribed on the return of peace, repaired to Nova Scotia, in which place the British government had provided an asylum for them. To this territory many of the negroes also were conducted, and declared to be free; and to this place many serious families likewise resorted, as soon as they found it inconvenient and dangerous to remain within the dominions of the American government; and to several of these certain portions of land were assigned by the British, as a remuneration for their sufferings and services. Among these associations of refugees, the more serious part became desirous of having missionaries established in their new settlement; and from a survey of their situation their claims became imperious. Dr. Coke was so deeply interested in their behalf, that he resolved, if possible, to render them assistance, both from England and America.

It was not, however, to the strenuous exertions of Dr. Coke, in favour of these refugees, that the more permanent inhabitants of Nova Scotia were primarily indebted for the sound of the gospel. Prior to this time, about the commencement of the war, Mr. William

Black, a native of Yorkshire, had been converted to God, had gone thither, had become a preacher, and had been made instrumental in lighting up the sacred flame on this part of the continent, and also in New-Brunswick, through which he occasionally travelled. On finding the numerous, though scattered inhabitants, willing to receive the gospel, Mr. Black had frequently importuned Mr. Wesley to send him some assistance. But although these countries belonged to England, Mr. Wesley could not be persuaded to send any preacher to the continent while the war continued. From a train of circumstances, which was at once unforeseen and unavoidable, the infant work devolved therefore on him and a few others, whose exertions were united to promote the interests of Jesus in these northern regions of the western world. But it was not to be expected that any considerable success should attend these almost solitary labours, in a country so vastly extensive as Nova Scotia, and among a scattered people, to whom Mr. Black's visits were transient, and not frequently repeated. But as the sacred flame had been kept alive, though discipline had been unavoidably neglected, the situation of these northern societies seconded the claims of the refugees, and after some time produced a partial compliance with the necessities and requests of the people.

Through the unabating exertions of Dr. Coke in their favour, two preachers of the name of Mann were prevailed upon to repair to Nova Scotia from the United States; and it was his full intention, after having returned to England, and stated the situation of the refugees and other inhabitants to Mr. Wesley, to visit them in person. But, through an incomprehensible dispensation of divine Providence, he was prevented; being driven by a storm to the West Indies, which led to the introduction of the gospel into this vast archipelago, as we shall hereafter notice.

In behalf of the Nova Scotians, Dr. Coke was not only successful in sending two missionaries, but he was equally so in procuring pecuniary assistance for their support. In the city of Baltimore alone he collected thirty pounds sterling in one afternoon, and in New-

York and Philadelphia he collected sixty pounds currency for the same benevolent purpose. In travelling over the continent, he took every occasion to represent the case of the Nova Scotians in a favourable light, and through his unwearied exertions the public became in no small degree interested in their favour. It was to him, therefore, that these northern settlers owed their obligations, under God, for that assistance which they continued to receive in the missionaries that were sent during their infancy, and in the means provided for their support; and which have ultimately led to the permanent establishment of the gospel in these distant and extensive regions.

Closely connected in his view with the missionaries in Nova Scotia, and the spread of the gospel in the United States, was his solicitude for the rising generation. The establishment of the college which he had always kept in view from his first landing in America, engrossed, therefore, no inconsiderable share of his attention. By appealing to the liberality of the people, in the course of his journeys throughout the different states which he visited, he found many who were willing to support his designs in making generous contributions toward the building. Mr. Asbury, who acted in concert with him, had also met with considerable success; and several of the preachers, in their respective circuits, had used their exertions to promote the important undertaking.

From the sums thus collected, and from a full persuasion that the people would not suffer the work to be abandoned for want of pecuniary assistance, Dr. Coke, on the 5th of January, 1785, gave orders that the materials should be procured for erecting the building. The work was accordingly begun, and placed under the direction of men deemed competent to the business, who, in the two succeeding years, made a considerable progress in the erection of this stately edifice.

The spot which had been selected for this seminary of learning was on a rising ground, about twenty-five miles from Baltimore. It contained about four acres of land, and was purchased of a Mr. Dallam for sixty pounds sterling. "The situation," says Dr. Coke,

when reviewing the ground and adjacent scenery, on a future occasion, "delights me more than ever. There is not, I believe, a point of it, from whence the eye has not a view of at least twenty miles: and in some parts the prospect extends even to fifty miles in length. The water part forms one of the most beautiful views in the United States; the Chesapeake bay, in all its grandeur, with a fine navigable river, the Susquehanna, which empties itself into it, lying exposed to view through a great extent of country."*

In erecting this college, he observes in another place, "our object is, not to raise gospel ministers, but to serve our pious friends, and our married preachers, in the proper education of their sons."† In this college their principal aim was to unite these two great ornaments of human nature, *genuine religion*, and *extensive learning*.

On a subsequent voyage to America, in 1787, Dr. Coke visited this building on the 8th of May, in company with Mr. Asbury, and found it in such a state of forwardness as to induce a hope that it would be ready for opening, and for the reception of pupils by the ensuing Christmas. But in these expectations they were rather too sanguine. The work, however, proceeded onward with regularity, so that before he had an opportunity of returning again to this spot, it had been so far advanced as to admit students who had made some proficiency in their learning, although the building was yet unfinished.

"On Friday, the 8th of May, 1789," says Dr. Coke, when on a subsequent tour on the continent, "we set off for our college. I was highly delighted with the progress they had made toward the completing of the building. During my stay at the college I had several long conversations with Dr. Hall, our president, and I am satisfied beyond a doubt that he is both the scholar, the philosopher, and the gentleman. He truly fears God, and pays a most exact and delicate attention to all the rules of the institution. Our classic tutor is a very promising person: he is not yet the polished scholar,

* Dr. Coke's Journal, p. 110. † Dr. Coke's Journal, p. 72.

like the president; but his manifest strength of understanding and persevering diligence will soon, I doubt not, perfect every thing that is wanting. And our English and mathematical master gives us considerable satisfaction."

To display the principles upon which this seminary was established, nothing more will be necessary than to insert the rules by which all were to be governed. These rules are as follow:—

1. The students shall rise at five o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, at the ringing of a bell.

2. All the students shall assemble together at six o'clock for public prayer, except in cases of sickness; and on any omission shall be responsible to the master.

3. From morning prayer till seven, they shall be allowed to recreate themselves, as hereafter directed.

4. At seven they shall breakfast.

5. From eight till twelve, they are to be closely kept at their respective studies.

6. From twelve to three, they are to employ themselves in recreation and dining; dinner to be ready at one o'clock.

7. From three till six, they are again to be kept closely to their studies.

8. At six they shall sup.

9. At seven there shall be public prayers.

10. From evening prayer till bedtime, they shall be allowed recreation.

11. They shall all be in bed at nine o'clock, without fail.

12. Their recreations shall be gardening, walking, riding, and bathing without doors; and the carpenter's, joiner's, cabinet-maker's, or turner's business within doors.

13. A large plot of ground shall be appropriated for a garden, and a person skilled in gardening shall be appointed to overlook the students employed in that recreation.

14. A convenient bath shall be made for bathing.

15. A master, or some proper person by him appointed, shall be always present at the time of bathing. Only one shall bathe at a time, and no one shall remain in the water above a minute.

16. No student shall be allowed to bathe in the river.

17. A place for working in wood shall be provided on the premises, with all proper instruments and materials, and a skilful person be employed to overlook the students at this recreation.

18. The students shall be indulged with nothing which the world calls *play*. Let this rule be observed with the strictest nicety; for those who play when they are young, will play when they are old.

19. Each student shall have a bed to himself whereever he boards.

20. The students shall lie on mattresses, not on feather beds; because we believe the mattresses to be more healthful.

21. The masters shall strictly examine, from time to time, whether those who board the students (if they board out of the seminary) comply with these rules, so far as they concern them.

22. A skilful physician shall be engaged to attend the students on every emergency, that the parents may be fully assured that proper care shall be taken of the health of their children.

23. The bishops shall examine by themselves, or their delegates, into the progress of all the students in learning, every half year, or oftener if possible.

24. The elders, deacons, and preachers, as often as they visit the seminaries respectively, shall examine the students concerning their knowledge of God and religion.

25. The students shall be divided into proper classes for that purpose.

26. A pupil who has a total incapacity to attain learning shall, after a sufficient trial, be returned to his parents.

27. If a student be convicted of any open sin, he shall for the first offence be reproved in private; for the second offence he shall be reproved in public; and for the third offence he shall be punished at the discretion of the master.

28. Idleness or any other fault may be punished with confinement, according to the discretion of the master.

29. A convenient room shall be set apart as a place of confinement.

Such were the rules and regulations which, after having been weighed and digested in the American conferences, were introduced by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, conjointly, into the newly established seminary that was denominated Cokesbury College; this being a compound of both their names. With respect to the principles on which the preceding rules are founded, and the objects which they had in view, they offer to the public the following observations.

"The first object we recommend is, to form the minds of the youth, through divine aid, to wisdom and holiness; instilling into their tender minds the principles of true religion, speculative, experimental, and practical; and training them in the ancient way, that they may be rational, scriptural Christians. For this purpose we recommend that not only the masters, but also our elders, deacons, and preachers embrace every opportunity of instructing the students in the great branches of the Christian religion.

"It is also our particular desire that all who shall be educated in Methodist seminaries, be kept at the utmost distance, as from vice in general, so in particular from softness and effeminacy of manners.

"The masters, therefore, should inflexibly insist on their rising early in the morning; and we are convinced, by constant observation and experience, that this is of vast importance both to body and mind. It is of admirable use for preserving a good, or improving a bad constitution. It is of peculiar service in all nervous complaints, both in preventing and removing them. And by thus strengthening the various organs of the body, it enables the mind to put forth its utmost energies.

"On the same principle the masters should prohibit *play* in the strongest terms; and in this we have the two greatest writers on the subject which perhaps any age has produced, (Mr. Locke and Mr. Rousseau) in favour of our sentiments; for though the latter was essentially mistaken in his religious system, yet his wisdom in other respects and extensive genius are indisputably acknowledged. The employments which we would recommend for the recreation of the students, are such as

are of the greatest public utility—*agriculture* and *architecture*; studies more especially necessary for a newly settled country: and of consequence the instructing of youth in all the practical branches of these important arts will be an effectual method of rendering them more useful to their country. Agreeably to this idea, the greatest statesmen that perhaps ever shone in the annals of history, Peter, the Russian emperor, who was deservedly styled *the Great*, disdained not to stoop to the employment of a ship carpenter. Nor was it rare during the purest times of the Roman republic to see the conquerors of nations, and deliverers of their country, return with all simplicity and cheerfulness to the exercise of the plough. In conformity to this sentiment, one of the completest poetic pieces of antiquity, the Georgics of Virgil, is written on the subject of husbandry; by the perusal of which, and submission to the above regulations, the students may delightfully unite the theory and the practice together. We say *delightfully*, for we are far from wishing that these employments should be turned into drudgery or slavery, but into pleasing recreations for the mind and body.

"In teaching the languages, care should be taken to read those authors, and those only, who join together the purity, the strength, and the elegance of their several tongues. And the utmost caution should be used that nothing immodest should be found in any of their books.

"But this is not all. We should take care that the books be not only inoffensive, but useful; that they contain as much strong sense and as much genuine morality as possible. As far, therefore, as is consistent with the foregoing observations, a choice and universal library should be provided for the use of the students according to their finances. And on this plan we trust that our seminaries of learning will in time send forth men who will be blessings to their country in every laudable office and employment of life; thereby uniting the two greatest ornaments of intelligent beings, which are too often separated, deep learning and genuine religion."*

* See Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, pp. 180–184.

On the morning of Saturday, the 9th of May, 1789, Dr. Coke personally examined all the classes in private, and found that many of the students had made a considerable proficiency in the various branches of learning. And with their progress so well were he and Mr. Asbury satisfied, that on the afternoon of the same day, they had a public exhibition of their respective improvements and talents.

"Two young men," he observes, "displayed great strength of memory, and great propriety of pronunciation, in the repetition of two chapters of Sheridan on Elocution, and were rewarded by Mr. Asbury, as a small testimony of our approbation, with a dollar each. One little boy, a son of Mr. Dallam, a neighbouring gentleman, delivered *memoriter* a fine speech out of Livy, with such an heroic spirit, and with such graceful propriety, that I presented him a little piece of gold. Three other boys also so excelled in gardening, that Mr. Asbury rewarded them with a dollar each. But what is best of all, many of them are truly awakened. However, we were obliged to undertake the painful task, in the presence of the trustees, masters, and students, of solemnly expelling a lad of fifteen years of age, to whose learning we had no objection, but whose trifling, irreligious conduct, and open ridicule among the students, of experimental religion, we could not pass over, as we were determined to have a college in which religion and learning should go hand in hand together, or to have none at all. But nothing relating to this institution, perhaps, has given me greater pleasure than to find we are already enabled to support four students fully, and two in part, preachers' sons and orphans, on the charitable foundation."*

But neither the pure intention of its founders, the admirable principles upon which its regulations were established, nor the beneficial effects that were expected to result from the institution, could preserve this college from the common accidents which are attendant upon all human affairs. We have seen its foundation laid; and, in the order of time, we have anticipated its com-

* Dr. Ccke's journal, p. 111.

parative completion; but before we return to the regular narration of facts, as they occur in the life of Dr. Coke, we must trace it to its grave.

In the year 1792, this college had acquired such a degree of importance as to admit upward of seventy students within its walls. In addition to this, its reputation had excited so much attention, that several young gentlemen from the southern states repaired thither to finish their education. To give it legalized respectability, some principal persons in the state informed its founders that the legislature were willing to grant an act of incorporation, that should enable them, under certain limitations, to confer degrees on the deserving. But for this authority no application was ever made; and consequently it remained on its primitive foundation until the whole building was consumed by fire.

From what source this calamity arose could never be ascertained. Dr. Coke supposes that it was done maliciously; but for this opinion no satisfactory reason has been assigned; so that the cause of its destruction remains a secret to the present hour. In the devouring conflagration not only the building, but the library and all the philosophical apparatus were totally destroyed, so that nothing remained but a desolated spot, to inform spectators that here Cokesbury college once stood. To discover, if possible, the perpetrators of this deed, the governor of the state advertised a reward of one thousand dollars; but nothing could procure such information as was necessary to bring the incendiaries to justice.

Dispirited with this calamity, Mr. Asbury resolved to have nothing more to do with colleges; but Dr. Coke was not to be intimidated, without making another effort. The genteel inhabitants in the vicinity, who had been much entertained with the philosophical lectures of Dr. Hall, the president, sympathized with the sufferers, and many among them expressed their wishes to have the institution again renewed. Actuated by the same principle, seventeen of Dr. Coke's principal friends in the Baltimore society met together on the occasion; and, after some consultation, immediately subscribed 1020*l.* toward the erection of a new college.

It happened, however, that at this time a large building which had been erected for balls and assemblies, was vacant in the city of Baltimore. They, therefore, made application to the proprietor, and purchased the whole premises, which were as handsome as any in the city, for the sum of 5,300*l*.

The ground and building thus purchased being too extensive for the new college, it was resolved, that on part of the premises a new church should be erected. The society at Baltimore entered into the general view, and subscribed among themselves 700*l*. toward defraying the expense; and begging from house to house they collected 600*l*. more throughout the city. For the remaining sum the former seventeen friends became responsible, and the college or academy and church were accordingly fitted up for use. To this college masters were soon appointed, and students sent; and from that peculiar pleasure with which the respectable inhabitants introduced their youth into this seminary, it appeared they were interested in its welfare. This academy soon flourished in a manner superior to what Cokesbury college had ever done, but unhappily a similar fate awaited it.

In the beginning of the year 1797, when Dr. Coke was at Charleston, in South Carolina, he received the melancholy tidings that all their buildings of the church and college in Baltimore were reduced to ashes, through the imprudence of some boys who had been making a bonfire with some shavings in an adjoining house. Unhappily, the flame which these thoughtless lads lighted up soon communicated to the house in which they were assembled, which was instantly in a blaze. From this house the church and college were immediately set on fire, which, with several adjoining buildings and warehouses, were burned to the ground, notwithstanding all the efforts which were made to extinguish the flames. The total loss sustained by the Methodists in the burning of this church and college, together with that occasioned by the burning of Cokesbury, was estimated at 10,000*l*. sterling.

Dr. Coke was now convinced, as Mr. Asbury had been before, that it was not the will of God for them to

undertake such expensive buildings, nor to attempt such popular establishments; that it was their duty to preach the gospel, and to apply such resources as were in their power to the more immediate means of calling sinners to repentance, and directing them to the Saviour of the world. The loss of this sum was to all an occasion of much regret, but particularly to Dr. Coke, whose wishes were now directed toward a provision being made for the families of such preachers as were married; for which purpose this sum, now for ever lost, would have been amply sufficient. The ministers of other denominations, when the Methodist church in Baltimore was consumed, generously offered the use of theirs for their immediate accommodation. Their offers were accepted with gratitude; and they continued to preach in them until their own loss was somewhat repaired, by the erection of another church to which no college was annexed.

Having thus beheld the melancholy torch extinguished, which lighted up the funeral pile of Cokesbury college, and also seen the ashes of its successor in Baltimore, we must now return to the conference of 1784, held in that city, from which the progress and conflagration of these buildings have led us to digress.

This early conference being ended, and the necessary arrangements for the future government of the societies made, Dr. Coke took his leave of Baltimore, and proceeded on an extensive tour to visit various churches throughout the states, before he embarked for England. During this journey, the primary objects which he kept in view were, the preaching of the gospel, the deplorable condition of the settlers and refugees in Nova Scotia, in whose behalf he solicited contributions to support some missionaries to be sent among them, the state of the negro slaves, for whom he took every occasion to plead; and, finally, the necessity of erecting Cokesbury college, which we have already beheld in flames.

In preaching the gospel, his word was attended with considerable success. In most places multitudes flocked to hear; and, when assembled, the greater part appeared to listen with considerable attention. In several places the work evidently revived in the hearts of many

belonging to the societies, whose numbers were greatly augmented from day to day. Toward the erection of the college he found the people in general exceedingly ready to contribute, and the sums which he collected far exceeded his expectation. In behalf of the refugees in Nova Scotia he discovered a principle of sympathy awakened. The necessity of sending missionaries among them was generally admitted, and few were backward, according to their ability, to render some assistance toward their support.

In prosecuting this arduous work in which he was engaged his life was several times endangered by an exposure to the watery element, both in traversing the seas, and in attempting to ford rivers while on the continent. A most awful instance of this latter kind occurred on Wednesday, March 8, 1785, an account of which I will set down in his own words.

"Yesterday there was a very heavy fall of snow, and hail, and sleet. The fall of sleet was so great that the trees seemed to be trees of ice. So beautiful a sight of the kind I never saw before. And now I am going to open a solemn scene. May God deeply impress it on my heart!

"We had this day a very sudden thaw. I had two runs of water to cross between Alexandria and Colchester, which swell exceedingly on any thaw or fall of rain; but, being earnestly desirous to get into the work, I determined to proceed on my journey. My servant, whom I had permitted to make a visit on the other side of the Chesapeake, had deceived me, by staying beyond his time; and the southern preachers knew not where I was, imagining me to be in the West Indies. A friend, who lives in Alexandria, came with me over the first run; and every body informed me that I could easily cross the second, if I crossed the first. When I came to the second, which was perhaps two hours after I had crossed the first, I found that I had two streams to pass. The first I went over without much danger; but in crossing the second, which was very strong and very deep, I did not observe that a tree, brought down by the flood, lay across the landing place. I endeavoured, but in vain, to drive my horse against

the stream, and go around the tree. I was afraid to turn the horse's head to the stream, and afraid to go back. In this dilemma, I thought it most prudent for me to lay hold on the tree, and go over it, the water being shallow on the other side of the tree. But I did not advert to the danger of loosening the tree from its hold. For no sooner did I execute my purpose, so far as to lay hold on the tree, (and that instant the horse was carried from under me,) but the motion that I gave it loosened it, and down the stream it instantly carried me.

"Some distance off, there grew a tree in the middle of the stream, the root of which had formed a little bank or island, and divided the stream; and here the tree which I held was stopped. Instantly there came down with the flood a large branch of a tree upon my back, which was so heavy that I was afraid it would break my back. I was now jammed up for a considerable time, (a few minutes appeared long at such a season,) expecting that my strength would soon be exhausted, and I should drop between the tree and the branch. Here I plead aloud with God in good earnest; one promise, which I particularly urged, I remember well, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' I felt no fear at all at the pain of dying, or of death itself, or of hell; and yet I found an unwillingness to die. All my castles, which I had built in the air for the benefit of my fellow creatures, passed in regular array before my mind, and I could not consent to give them up. It was an awful time. However, through the blessing of my almighty Preserver, (to whom be all the glory,) I at last got up my knee, which I had long endeavoured at in vain, upon the tree, which I grasped, and then soon disengaged myself, and climbed up the little bank. Here I panted for breath for some time: and when I recovered, perceiving the water between the little island and the shore not to be very deep or very strong, I ventured through it, and got to land. I was now obliged to walk about a mile, shivering, before I came to a house. The master and mistress were from home, and were not expected to return that night. But the principal negro lent me an old ragged shirt, coat, waistcoat, and breeches, &c., and the negroes

made a large fire, and hung up my clothes all night to dry.

"Before bedtime, a man, who came to the run on a small horse, perceiving mine near the brook, concluded that the rider was drowned; and wanting to cross the stream on urgent business, mounted my horse, and being well acquainted with the run, came over safely. He then perceived the footsteps of a person on the other side of the water, and concluded they were made by the person to whom the horse belonged; and, following the track, brought horse and bags safe to me. As he seemed to be a poor man, I gave him half a guinea. At night I lay on a bed upon the ground, and, my strength having been so exhausted, slept soundly all night. Thus was I wonderfully preserved; and I trust I shall never forget so awful but very instructive a scene."*

Dr. Coke being thus providentially preserved from a watery grave, and even snatched from the jaws of death, pursued his plan of travelling to call sinners to repentance, without meeting, for some time, with any thing beyond the common occurrences of life. Of the quarterly meetings held in the United States, he observes that the brethren for twenty, and sometimes thirty, and even forty miles around, assemble together; that the congregations on these occasions are exceedingly large; and that the meetings continue for two days, and sometimes more. At these meetings all the travelling preachers throughout the circuit preach in regular succession; and on some occasions the local preachers lengthen out the service with additional preaching and exhortations. To these sermons and exhortations a lovefeast was formerly added; but this, after the episcopal form was introduced, in some instances, has been superseded by the sacrament. Their public worship has therefore been sometimes protracted to six or seven hours in length; but even in these cases the congregations have manifested no impatience. It is obvious from hence, that the habits and manners of the Americans in this department of Methodism must be widely different from those of the Methodists in England.

* Dr. Coke's journal, p. 27.

Hitherto, while Dr. Coke had preserved a profound silence on the subject of negro slavery, all were pleased; and he was permitted to go on his way in peace. But no sooner did he lift up his voice against the injustice of the traffic, than it became a signal for the commencement of hostilities against him. In the province of Virginia, while preaching in a barn, on Sunday, the 9th of April, 1785, he took occasion to introduce the subject of slavery, and expatiated on its injustice in terms that were not calculated to flatter his auditors. Many were provoked to hear those truths which from their earliest infancy they had been taught to stifle, and which their interest still instructed them to conceal. A small party, therefore, withdrew from the house, and formed a combination to offer him some personal violence as soon as he came out. To persevere in this resolution they were stimulated by a lady, whose fashionable appearance was more conspicuous than either her politeness or her humanity. This lady informed the enraged mob that she would give them fifty pounds in case they would seize the preacher, and give him one hundred lashes.

On leaving the house, Dr. Coke was instantly surrounded by a ferocious party, who began with threats, and proceeded to put these threats into execution. A magistrate, however, who was present, opposed the violence which they menaced, by seizing one who appeared anxious to be foremost. Another, who seemed to have more strength, as he evidently had more zeal and courage than religion, was preparing to repel the assailants by giving them battle. This gentleman was a military officer, and sustained the rank of colonel. Their united influence had a most powerful effect. The most courageous began to be abashed, and marks of timidity were visible in all. They therefore gave vent to their rage in idle imprecations, and suffered the object of their vengeance to escape without farther molestation.

But rage and hostility were not the only effects produced by this discourse. The magistrate who had espoused the cause of Dr. Coke began to view the subject in a more serious light; and to show that he acted from a pure principle, immediately emancipated fifteen slaves. The report of his conduct extended the benefit still far-

ther, and induced another to follow so laudable an example, and to emancipate eight slaves. And the united examples of both induced another to emancipate one. These effects were instantaneously visible; but to what extent his faithful but sharp reproofs operated in secret, we must not expect fully to know until we enter the world of spirits.

On the following day, Dr. Coke again preached in the neighbourhood, and was met by a large mob that were armed with staves and clubs; and with these weapons they waited in silence until he had finished, after which they permitted him to pass quietly away, without making any use of their instruments of intimidation. For what purpose they assembled thus, without using either violence or threatening language, although it is easy to imagine, it is difficult to determine with precision. Dr. Coke supposed, on this occasion, that they had come with a resolutiou not to molest him while he remained silent on the subject of slavery; but that it was their intention to fall upon him with brutal violence as soon as he touched on the interdicted subject. His discourse, however, not leading him toward this forbidden ground, their scheme was defeated, and he seemed to be protected from the mob.

Toward the end of this week, his plan brought him again into the state of North Carolina; but in this state he observed a profound silence in public respecting the slaves, as he had done before. This silence arose from the existence of a law which prohibited any one throughout the state from emancipating his slaves, if he were so disposed. It was therefore in vain to introduce the subject, when no advantages could be expected to result from the irritation which would almost inevitably ensue. The injustice of negro slavery, nevertheless, still occupied his thoughts, and at a yearly conference which was held in this state while he was present, a petition was drawn up, and presented to the legislative assembly of North Carolina, praying them to pass an act that, in a land which boasted of its independence, the slave holders should at least be permitted to emancipate their slaves, if they deemed it expedient. This petition was signed by the conference, and sanguine hopes were en-

tertained of its ultimate success, as the governor was favourable to the measure, and had signified his opinion to Mr. Asbury on a former occasion. But this was not the only state in which interest was found to be too strong for the dictates of humanity and justice.

On repairing from North Carolina to the state of Virginia, in which the law permits the emancipation of slaves, Dr. Coke again appealed to the dealers in human flesh and blood. But having learned wisdom by what he had suffered, he found it not less necessary to address the negroes than to direct his discourse to their masters. As a revolt among their slaves was that which the masters chiefly dreaded, it was incumbent on Dr. Coke to wipe away the odium which the imputation of inculcating such conduct might occasion. The duty of obedience among the slaves while thus held in bondage was therefore enforced by him in terms not less energetic than those in which the injustice of the laws which tolerated the traffic was reprehended. It was by thus blending their mutual obligations;—by urging the slave to obey while the law remained, and the master to emancipate his slave from a principle of natural justice, that in many places a balance was preserved, and he was permitted to inveigh against the slavery of the human species in peace.

This peace, however, was rather superficial than substantial. It was a deceitful exterior which cherished, beneath its surface, a volcano that was preparing to explode. At a conference held in this state, many of the principal friends of Methodism assembled from various quarters to urge the necessity of suspending the operation of the rule against slavery, which had created so much uneasiness; and which, if persisted in, they were apprehensive would ultimately render Methodism unproductive of any public advantage. But although these pleas were specious, Dr. Coke and his friends were not to be proselyted by them. It was therefore brought to this issue, that unless the rule against slavery were permitted to operate, since it was founded upon principles of immutable justice, and supported by reason, by the moral feelings of the heart, and by the powerful voice of revelation, preaching should be withdrawn al-

together from those circuits and places in which it was too obnoxious to be suffered. Astonished at these determinations, the opposers of the rule began seriously to weigh the opposite members of the alternative, to one of which they were compelled to submit. And finding, how desirable soever it might be to preserve the gospel in peace, that it would be attended with more serious inconveniences to lose it altogether, though connected with its rule against slavery, they withdrew their opposition. A letter was accordingly addressed to the conference, expressive of their resolution, and praying for a reappointment of the preachers, although their avowed hostility to the detestable trade might involve them in considerable trouble.

To blunt, as much as possible, the edge of anticipated violence, it was resolved in this conference to draw up a petition, that should be presented to the general assembly of Virginia, praying that body to pass an act for the immediate or gradual emancipation of the negro slaves, under such regulations as the assembly in its wisdom should see meet. This petition was drawn up, and a copy given to each preacher, to take with him into his circuit, to present to the freeholders for the signatures of such as could be induced to favour their legal design. Already had the subject been debated in the assembly, and many powerful voices had declaimed against this authorized abomination. Among the freeholders, also, many had expressed the same sentiments; so that, although the measure was unpopular among men whose pecuniary interests absorbed every other consideration, it was not without reason that sanguine hopes were entertained of its final success.

In the meanwhile, Dr. Coke, on the breaking up of the conference, proceeded onward from town to town, preaching the word, and exhorting the negroes to obedience, while he protested against slavery; at the same time making collections for the college that was erecting, and interesting the people in favour of the refugees in Nova Scotia. On every occasion, beside that of the slave business, peace and prosperity crowned his efforts. When this obnoxious subject was omitted, he was caressed, and received with all the veneration and respect

which a delegate of heaven can claim. But on other occasions, when this fatal chord was touched, it instantly vibrated discord through the congregations, and applauses gave place to execrations. In some places the members of society were disgusted, and many among them withdrew: and sometimes the houses of the planters, in which he had been accustomed to receive the most hospitable entertainment, were shut against him. On other occasions, so far as his enemies could extend their influence, he found himself excluded from the churches, and places of public worship, to which he had been previously invited, and had frequently had access.

But these discouragements were not without their corresponding advantages. In several places the loss of old friends was but a prelude to the acquirement of new; and while some became enraged at his faithful testimony against slavery, many were convinced of its injustice, and proclaimed liberty to their captives. In the midst of these vicissitudes, the societies also almost everywhere increased, so that while they were abandoned by the selfish and inhumane, they were augmented by new members, whose views were in unison with the doctrine and principles thus uniformly inculcated, though variously received.

Animated by these encouragements more than he was intimidated by surrounding hostilities, Dr. Coke determined to persevere. But he was particularly solicitous to promote, through the medium of the petition, the grand object at which their varied efforts aimed; being well assured that, if this should ultimately prove successful, their measures would be accomplished, and hostilities would cease. To facilitate this, a favourable opportunity now presented itself.

On Wednesday, the 25th of May, Dr. Coke met Mr. Asbury by appointment, at Alexandria, in Virginia, not far from which was the seat of General Washington, from whom they received an invitation to dine on the following day. Accepting of this invitation, they repaired to his hospitable mansion. Mount Vernon, the general's seat, Dr. Coke describes "as very elegant, built upon the great river Potomac, for the improvement of the navigation of which, he is carrying on, jointly

with the state, some amazing plans. He received us very politely, and was very open to access. He is quite the plain country gentleman. After dinner we desired a private interview, and opened to him the grand business on which we came, presenting to him our petition for the emancipation of the negroes, and entreating his signature, if the eminence of his station did not render it inexpedient for him to sign any petition." On the subject of emancipation, "he informed us that he was of our sentiments, and had signified his thoughts to most of the great men of the state, though he did not see it proper to sign the petition; but if the assembly took the subject into consideration, he would signify his sentiments by a letter."*

Although General Washington, from being president of the general congress, could not find it convenient, as a citizen of Virginia, to sign any petition to be presented to the assembly of that state, yet the public and undisguised avowal of his sentiments in favour of the principles upon which the petition was founded, was a most important acquisition. Both Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury felt its influence in all its force; and their future movements respecting slavery were so conducted as to coincide with the sanguine hopes they had been led to entertain. Under present circumstances, as the question was to be agitated in the legislative body, common prudence dictated the omission of every action that might tend to provoke opposition, and create unnecessary irritation.

It is an obvious fact that, while the preachers continued to declaim in public against the injustice of slavery, they furnished their enemies with a plausible pretext to form a counter petition, which might ultimately tend to defeat their own. They might have represented Dr. Coke and his colleagues as countenancing factions;—as acting independently of legislative sanction;—and as dictating rules of action to the people, which tended to alienate that submission which the state had an exclusive right to command. And that a legislative compliance with their requests would appear to be extorted through

* Dr. Coke's journal, p. 45.

fear, rather than granted from a principle of generous concession; and thus enable them to triumph in that contempt to which their clamours had exposed the government. That it would argue an imbecility in the constituted authority to be thus awed into submission by indirect menaces, and tarnish the dignity of the state, by reproaching it with a want of power to enforce obedience to established usages, agreeably to the competent dictates of its own wisdom.

To prevent these plausable pretences from being urged, was therefore a necessary step to be taken in the present crisis of affairs. Accordingly, on the second of June, when their conference was opened, the rule respecting slavery was taken into serious consideration; and judging from the manner in which it had been withstood, that steady perseverance might ultimately defeat a greater good, it was finally determined that its operations should, for the present, be suspended. To this measure Dr. Coke was the more willing to accede, as, being about to take his leave of the continent, and to return to England, he was anxious to leave the societies in peace. Of the lawfulness of this rule, no doubt was ever entertained by the conference, but its expediency was rendered somewhat problematical, through existing circumstances; and on this ground it was permitted to rest.

In pursuing his journeys through the states, Dr. Coke frequently found himself exposed to imminent dangers. Sometimes he has been benighted in dreary forests; and, like his Lord and Master, has had scarcely where to lay his head. Sometimes he has missed his way, and has been compelled to wander in a forlorn condition, through trackless deserts, exposed to the violence of the elements. Sometimes his accommodations were exceedingly uncomfortable, and his provisions both scanty and bad. "I have hardly," says he in one place, "eaten any thing these ten weeks of the flesh kind, but swine's flesh and shad fish." And in another he observes, "I was met by our dear and valuable friend Dr. Hopkins. He brought me to his house that evening, though it was dark before we reached it. Here I found myself locked up in the midst of mountains. So romantic a scene I

think I never beheld. The wolves, I find, frequently come up to our friends' fences at night, howling in an awful manner, and sometimes they seize upon a straying sheep."

But it was not to wolves, to dreary nights, to the violence of the elements, to the want of accommodations, or to the frowns of solitude, while traversing the pathless desert, that Dr. Coke was most dangerously exposed. His perils by water were still more terrific than the preceding, and in crossing in one place, while travelling toward Alexandria, in order to reach a bridge, under which the principal stream ran, the inundation which the violent rain had occasioned was so great, that the water entered into the top of his boots while he sat on horseback. In another place, where the bridge had been broken down by the impetuous current, the company were compelled to drive their horses across, not daring to venture on their backs, and in this they were in the greatest danger of losing them, the torrent being so strong as to carry them away. Providentially, after many efforts, the animals escaped, and landed safely on the opposite side. As to themselves, they were compelled with great labour to patch up the fragments of the broken bridge, and to venture their lives on the shattered planks that trembled under their feet. During this day they had travelled forty miles; and they were so detained, through the accidents to which they had been exposed, that darkness and fatigue overtook them before they could reach the place of their destination; but at length, by the good hand of God upon them, they found an inn on the road, which alleviated the horrors of their situation. On the day following they were locked up by the surrounding torrents; and on that which succeeded, they marched in the midst of perils. "After many doubts," says Dr. Coke, "and I confess with trembling, I was prevailed upon to walk over a long pine tree, which lay across a strong and deep stream of water, in which I must have been inevitably drowned, if my foot had slipped. A man went before, leading me by the hand. But here, as everywhere, the Lord was on my right hand that I should not fall." On the afternoon of this day, he crossed the same stream of

water, in which he had been carried down by a floating tree, as we have already noticed in a preceding part of this chapter. But on the present occasion the water was so low that he had nothing to apprehend. It was here he observes, "where the awful scene happened, which I trust, through the blessing of God, I shall never forget."

Dr. Coke had now been in America from the 3d of November, 1784, to June 1, 1785; and he was on the eve of taking his departure for England. During his residence on the continent he had travelled several thousand miles, and had encountered difficulties of the most complicated, severe, and trying nature. By what motive then can we suppose him to have been actuated, but that by which he uniformly professed to be guided? If worldly aggrandizement had been his object he certainly selècted an unpromising path, or totally mistook his road. If the prospect of wealth had allured him, a gentleman of a decent and independent fortune would hardly think of finding it among the wolves of the Blue Ridge, or the inundations of the desert. If ambition had tempted him, he would rather have sought to gather fame from less thorny shrubs. If vanity had been his ruling passion, it would have induced him to secure the approbation of the powerful, the wealthy, and the great. And if the plaudits of mortals had stimulated him to exertion, he would have palliated the enormities of slavery, and have exchanged the execrations which he endured on that account, for the smiles which are always ready to flatter an ignoble spirit. In befriending the negroes, and endeavouring to alleviate the rigours of their condition, while he generously aimed at their moral improvement and eternal welfare, it will be readily admitted that "Coke appeared ambitious;" but in other respects "ambition should be formed of sterner stuff."

Having thus, as an instrument in the hands of God, formed a new era in the annals of Methodism in the western world, Dr. Coke took leave of his numerous and affectionate friends, and embarked on board a ship called the Olive Branch, on the 3d of June, to sail for England. Contrary winds, however, impeded his pro-

gress, so that more than a week elapsed before they could finally leave the American shores. During this interval his time was occupied in writing letters to his friends whom he was about to leave, giving them advice, and bidding them farewell. The wind at length proving favourable they took their departure; and, without meeting with any thing remarkable, reached England in safety.

CHAPTER VIII.

Meets with an unpleasant reception from Mr. Wesley at the conference—Causes developed, and his conduct vindicated—Entertains thoughts of separating from the Establishment—Opens a missionary correspondence with a gentlemen in India—Visits the Norman Isles—First introduction of Methodism into the islands—Resolute perseverance of Dr. Adam Clarke amid persecution—Dr. Coke sails a second time for America—Prominent disasters of their voyage—Manner of employing his time on board—Superstitious brutality of the captain—Tranquil state of Dr. Coke's mind—Driven to Antigua.

It was the lot of Dr. Coke, soon after his arrival in England, to meet, from Mr. Wesley, with a reception at the conference which, from his indefatigable exertions during his absence, he was not prepared to expect.

We have already had occasion to notice that, on the political questions which had involved Great Britain and America in a war, Mr. Wesley's sentiments were decidedly in favour of the mother country. And although he had relaxed in his language since the independence of the United States had been acknowledged, his views remained unaltered, and he was not much disposed to hear the propriety of these sentiments questioned. On the part of Dr. Coke we have also seen that, from the official situation in which he was placed by Mr. Wesley, on his arrival in America, he thought himself under a moral necessity of joining in an address to General Washington, as president of the American congress, in behalf of all the Methodists in the United States.

The various addresses, thus presented, soon found their way into the American newspapers, and in these papers they were brought across the Atlantic. Among these addresses there was none that attracted the attention of the English Methodists so much as that which bore the signature of Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, as superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. A copy of this address had been carefully preserved, and it was now introduced as a ground of censure against the doctor.

It was urged against him that, as a subject of Great Britain, it was inconsistent with his character to sign the address. That several expressions therein contained, in favour of the American government, implied a severe reflection on our own, and could not justly have been used by a British subject, unless he had renounced all allegiance to his sovereign, and withdrawn himself from the constitution of his country. That as a member of the Methodist society in England, and a leading character in the connection, his conduct was calculated to provoke the indignation of government. And, finally, that the address itself was a tacit impeachment of Mr. Wesley's political sentiments, and tended to place the whole body of Methodists in a very equivocal and suspicious light.

Dr. Coke heard these charges urged against him in profound silence. In the mere abstract, when separated from the colouring of aggravation, they were, perhaps, nearly true; but when viewed in relation to that double character which he was called to sustain, the occasions of them seemed unavoidably to arise from the situation in which he was placed.

Under these circumstances, as some decisive steps were necessary to be taken in this critical affair, it was finally determined that the name of Dr. Coke should be omitted in the minutes for the succeeding year. This prudent resolution had the desired effect; and the business of conference proceeded and terminated in peace.

But this silent mark of disapprobation, as was evident from the effects which followed, was on the whole more nominal than real. The doctor still maintained his rank

in Mr. Wesley's affectionate regard, and continued to retain those offices which he had hitherto filled. At the conclusion of the conference, he proceeded, as though nothing disagreeable had occurred, travelling through the societies in the same manner as he had travelled before he went to America.

Dr. Coke, during his residence on the continent, had heard so much of the abominable conduct of the American clergy who had absconded at the commencement of the war; and had seen so much that was disgusting in those that now supplied some churches, that his indignant feelings were roused to an exalted pitch. The strong impressions which these reports and observations had made, continued to haunt him while on the continent, and to be his companions while returning to England. And such was the effect which they produced in his mind that, on his arrival in this country, he was strongly prepossessed with an idea that it would be for the interests of vital Christianity, and for the welfare of Methodism, if the Methodists were wholly to withdraw from the Establishment, and become a separate body. His views on this subject he communicated to others, who, coinciding with him in sentiment, so far confirmed him in the propriety of the measure, that he formed the outline of a plan which he thought the Methodist conference might prudently carry into execution.

It was not long, however, that he continued under the influence of these erroneous impressions. His residence in England soon taught him that he had made an unjustifiable transfer of the conduct of the American clergy to those of Britain. With this enlightened view he observed, in reply to the strictures published on his sermon preached at Baltimore, that, "fallen as the ministers of the Establishment in England in general are, they are incomparably to be preferred before the clergy of America." In consequence of this change in his views and prejudices, which the conduct of the American clergy had excited, the plan was discarded before it came to full maturity; and it is sincerely to be hoped that, being interred, nothing may ever occur henceforth to call it from its grave.

Of the error, into which Dr. Coke was thus indis-

creetly led, he was afterward more fully sensible. And, as "a noble mind disdains not to repent," he frankly acknowledged his precipitancy in a letter which he wrote on an opposite occasion to the bishop of London, an extract from which, together with the bishop's reply, will be hereafter inserted.

In the early months of the year 1786, Dr. Coke travelled through a considerable part of England, preaching to the various congregations which assembled; and, with the true spirit of a missionary, which he had been solicitous to cultivate on his voyage to the continent, endeavouring to excite their benevolent feelings toward the refugees in Nova Scotia, whose cause he had espoused while in America, and still continued to support with unremitting zeal. To the north of England he chiefly directed his journeys; and prior to his return to London, he penetrated into a part of Scotland. In this infant state of things, his success in appealing to the liberality of the people was equal to any expectations that prudence might form. It was not indeed to be compared with the contributions of the present enlightened and liberal age; but the collections which he made, together with the assistance procured by his friends, enabled him to accomplish the object of his wishes; although the interposition of Providence turned the application of the amount in a new direction, which no person could at that time have anticipated.

But although Nova Scotia was the primary object which he had in view, his exertions were not exclusively restricted to this part of the continent. His mind seems to have expanded with the journeys he had taken, and his benevolence began to embrace the inhabitants of every zone. In the United States he saw an ample field for missionary labours. It was a region in which thousands were living without hope and without God in the world; and among whom even the sound of the gospel had scarcely been heard for many years. To these secluded districts he was solicitous to send ministers; but the resources which have since supplied the means of support were at this time in a great measure unexplored; so that he was compelled to behold the spiritual distresses of his fellow-creatures, without having the

power to furnish them with an adequate relief. Still his missionary spirit remained with unabating ardour, and even rose above those pecuniary embarrassments which seemed to increase its internal vigour by circumscribing the extent of its operations.

From Wales, the place of his nativity, he had repaired to England; and from England he had proceeded to Scotland and Ireland. From Europe he had taken a voyage to America, and had opened a correspondence with a gentleman in Asia, relative to the establishment of a mission among the benighted pagans of India. In all these movements nothing but a unity of principle is discoverable, varying in its operations as circumstances pointed out the most probable means of accomplishing the end he had in view; which, in its aggregate amount, included the glory of God, the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the ultimate happiness of the human race. And, although the result of his communications with India at this time, amounted to little more than a developement of the miserable condition of the people, sunk in the lowest state of mental degradation; this very gloomy account, instead of throwing him into despondency, left on his mind an impression in their favour that was never to be effaced.

Of a mission to India, the undertaking presented itself before him in all its magnitude; but an adequacy of means proportioned to the end was not in his power. This important work was therefore kept in reserve, until a happy combination of circumstances should appear to point out the will of Providence, without exposing those who should engage in the arduous task to the charge of being deluded by visionary expectations. More than twenty-seven years elapsed before this favourable concurrence of circumstances appeared. It was then embraced as a call from God; and Dr. Coke, though far advanced in years, undertook the superintendency of the work, in the prosecution of which he finished his mortal career. But these eventful incidents will appear before us hereafter, when we advance to that period of his life in which they will be given in detail. At present we must return to his labours and employment in 1786, during which he paid a visit to the Nor-

man Isles, and was made instrumental in the hand of God, of establishing a Methodist society in Guernsey. But as many erroneous accounts respecting the establishment of Methodism in these islands have been published, it may not be improper to take a retrospective survey of its origin, and to detail the facts in their various connections leading to this result, especially as information has been received from an authentic source.

The island of Jersey, in which Methodism first appeared, is about thirty miles in circumference, and contains upward of twenty thousand inhabitants. It has twelve parish churches, which are supplied by regular ministers, under the jurisdiction of a dean. But notwithstanding such ecclesiastical provision, vital religion was but little known among the inhabitants for a series of years, in the early periods of its history.

God had indeed called the people to repentance, by gentle but redoubled strokes of his rod; but these solemn warnings seem to have produced no lasting effects. One was by repeated shocks of an earthquake for several days successively, which so deeply affected the mind of the aged clergyman of St. Helier, that he called the people of his charge to a daily attendance on public worship in the church, so long as the visitation continued. But, although the alarm excited by the threatened calamity was considerable, the serious impressions that were apparent subsided with the occasion, and no effectual reformation was produced in the lives of the inhabitants. Another warning was given in the year 1781, when a detachment of French soldiers invaded the island, and, in the conflict which ensued, several lives, on both sides, were lost. But still the native islanders "did not turn to him that smote them, neither did they seek the Lord of hosts."

A large fleet of ships was annually fitted out from this island, for fishing on the banks of Newfoundland. This afforded many of the sailors an opportunity of going on shore, and while on shore, of attending the ministry of the Rev. Lawrence Coughlan, a preacher belonging to Lady Huntingdon's connection, who resided at St. John's. Some of these sailors being seriously affected under his preaching, declared on their return to Jersey,

both in public and private, the blesssed effects which had resulted from Mr. Coughlan's ministry. Soon after this the captain of a vessel from Poole, in Dorsetshire, who brought government stores to Jersey in time of war, and also traded there subsequently in times of peace, preached on almost every return at St. Helier. At his instance also a blind man from Poole was induced to visit them, and to reside a short season in the island as a stated minister. By all these means a few persons, both in town and country, were brought under a serious concern for their souls, and for some time attended the meeting; but this last preacher being obliged to return to England for want of support, the flock became scattered like sheep without a shepherd.

Such was the state of things, when a small number of religious soldiers, belonging to a regiment which was ordered from England to Jersey, providentially came thither. These men had heard the gospel under Captain Webb, at Winchester and Southampton; and, finding on their arrival little help or food for their souls in their new situation, they asked the few serious professors, with whom they soon became acquainted, if they were willing (being Calvinists) to receive a preacher from Mr. Wesley's connection, provided one could be obtained. To this they consented. The soldiers therefore immediately wrote a letter to Mr. Jasper Winscomb, a local preacher at Whitchurch, requesting him to lay their case before Mr. Wesley, by letter, and solicit assistance.

Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., a gentleman of fortune, liberality, and piety, who had some years before joined the Methodist communion, and preached in connection with that people, happened, through the good providence of God, to be at this time on a short excursion from London, with that aged and truly venerable man, when he produced the letter just received from Mr. Winscomb. Mr. Brackenbury, on considering the proposal, and having some acquaintance with the French language, viewed it as a call from God, and immediately offered his services. The offer was thankfully accepted by Mr. Wesley; and, in a few days, toward the end of December, 1783, that gentleman, having received letters

of recommendation in London, and being also commended by the prayers of the society in the new chapel, City Road, to the grace of God for the work, embarked on board a vessel at Southampton for Jersey. He had at this time in his service Mr. Alexander Kilham, who afterward set himself at the head of a party that separated from the Methodist connection. As Mr. Kilham had been a local preacher in the place where he lived, Mr. Brackenbury considered him as his coadjutor in the gospel, no less than his servant; and they soon began to exercise their ministry, first in an old religious house near the sea, and afterward in a room in the town, which Mr. B. had hired for the purpose. These meetings were exceedingly disturbed, and the demon of persecution raged horribly. But the Lord stood by and strengthened his servants; and all those who had been previously converted, as well as those who had recently turned to the Lord, sweetly coalesced into one body. This union particularly appeared at a lovefeast, held at St. Helier, when all differences of opinion were lost and swallowed up in the overflowings of divine and fraternal affection; and French and English, in their respective tongues, unanimously declared the wonderful works of God.

The same riotous proceedings, in process of time, extended to different parts of the island as the work spread; and continued, with some intervals of rest, for several years following. During these days of trouble, the sufferers sought redress from the civil power, but unhappily they sought it in vain, until a widow of St. Mary's, at whose house the meetings were held, having been long molested by the mob, by appealing to the court obtained a hearing. Her case was considered; the rioters were fined, and compelled to find security for their good behaviour in future; in consequence of which peace was procured. Amid these oppositions, religion, in its life and power, continued to flourish; while those local preachers who had exercised their ministry from the beginning prosecuted their work, and some new ones were raised up. Societies also were formed over the greater part of the island. For awhile Mr. B.'s hired house served for a place of worship; but

afterward a more commodious building in the centre of the town was converted to the same use; and finally, a large and handsome chapel was erected by subscription.

At an early period of Mr. Brackenbury's ministry, one *Peter Arrivé*, of the island of Guernsey, who traded in a small vessel to Jersey, a man of a wicked life, and of rough manners, paid a visit to his sisters at St. Helier, in Jersey. These sisters, who were among the first fruits of Mr. Brackenbury's ministry, prevailed on their brother to accompany them to the preaching house, that, hearing for himself, he might not be deluded with the ridiculous tales which common report had thrown into circulation. In compliance with their request he accordingly went, and was deeply awakened; and with these serious impressions he returned to Guernsey, to which island he invited Mr. Brackenbury to come and preach. More than twelve months, however, elapsed when, under serious apprehensions of a formidable opposition on account of the prevailing wickedness of the people, Mr. B. made his first visit. The event proved more favourable than his fears; for he was received with much civility, and even permitted to speak in several houses without interruption, to numerous and attentive hearers. This was in December, 1785. Shortly afterward he was followed by M. De Queteville; and in the summer of 1786 by Dr. Coke, who, in company with M. De Queteville, formed, as already observed, the first society in this island. Dr. Coke was also permitted to preach in the church at St. Helier, in Jersey, and afterward, holding a lovefeast with the members of the society, the Lord was eminently present to the joy and satisfaction both of him and them.

In this same year, 1786, the prospect which opened in the Norman isles appearing favourable, induced Mr. Wesley to send another preacher; and Mr. Adam Clarke, now Dr. Clarke, was appointed to the work. Preaching at St. Aubin, the treatment he received was even more severe than that which his predecessors had experienced at St. Helier. The house in which he preached was frequently surrounded and assaulted by a furious mob; and, in their various attacks, it was nearly pulled to pieces. To himself the most violent personal

indignities were frequently offered, which more than once endangered his life. On finding, however, that he was not to be intimidated, one of the magistrates placed himself at the head of the mob, and with his own hands dragged him from the pulpit. The drummer of the St. Aubin militia was then called, who actually beat his drum through the street, while the preacher was conducted by the mob in the rear to the extremity of the town, and dismissed with a most ferocious assurance that this was only a specimen of what he must expect in case he ever presumed to pay them another visit. But this ill usage was not sufficient to drive him from the field of duty. He uniformly told them that at the appointed time he should again appear, whatever consequences might ensue. The mob, on finding him supported by an undaunted resolution, surrounded him on his return, rather to admire his bravery than to execute their threatenings; and, permitting him to proceed in peace, they became the savage protectors of the man whom they had confederated to destroy.

In the island of Guernsey Dr. Clarke was enabled during his stay to erect a commodious chapel in the the town of St. Peter, and to collect a congregation, now settled into serious and attentive hearers. In 1787 he also visited the little island of Alderney, and was received with the greatest cordiality. Here also an infant church was planted, but not without opposition, through a train of providential circumstances which it would be tedious to enumerate. Of his useful labours in Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney, together with a detailed account of the persecutions to which he was exposed, and also of his Christian fortitude, zeal, and perseverance in the midst of danger, a memorial is preserved in the life of the Rev. John Wesley, by Messrs. Coke and Moore, to which the reader is referred who desires to obtain particular information on these subjects.*

Dr. Coke, on returning from the Norman Isles, began to prepare for another voyage across the Atlantic. From personal observations, and from letters, he had increased his knowledge of the great want of preachers

* See Coke's and Moore's Life of Wesley, p. 428, &c.

in many places, and had found that the necessities of all were exceedingly urgent. But as he had more particularly espoused the cause of the Nova Scotians, and received contributions for the support of the gospel among them, these formed the primary object of his present consideration. Having made every necessary preparation, and procured three missionaries, Messrs. Hammet, Warrener, and Clarke, to accompany him, he set his face toward the regions of Nova Scotia. It was not his intention to remain long in that territory; neither was he fully resolved to leave behind him there all the missionaries that were to be his companions. In these appointments, appearances and circumstances were to be his guide, under the direction of a discretionary power. From Nova Scotia he intended to revisit the United States, and to make a second tour through the provinces from which he had sailed about sixteen months before. But God, whose way is in the whirlwind, and path in the great waters, gave a new direction to his movements, and led the mission that was intended for the north, into a warmer region. By these means, he made the tempest which assailed them on the Atlantic subservient to his wise designs, and productive in its issues and consequences of one of the first missions that the Methodists have been made instrumental of establishing in the world.

Dr. Coke and his companions embarked on this voyage at Gravesend, on Sunday, the 24th of September, 1786, on board of a vessel bound to Halifax. The voyage was, on the whole, the most perilous he ever undertook, and perhaps one of the most distressing periods of his life; as they were compelled to contend with adverse winds and violent storms during a tedious passage of ten weeks; and finally, after sustaining innumerable hardships, to abandon the port of their primary destination, and seek for shelter in the torrid zone.

During the first five days and nights, contrary winds prevented them from making any progress; so that amid stormy seas and hostile elements, they did nothing but cruise between the south of France and the Isle of Wight. On the night of the 28th they narrowly escaped being run down by a large coal ship, which, if they had

not providentially slipped close by her side, would have compelled them to find

"The ship their coffin, and the sea their grave."

The adverse gale, continuing without any abatement, obliged them on the 30th to take shelter in St. Helen's. From hence, on the ensuing day, they got up to Spithead, when the missionaries went on shore, and once more paid a visit to their friends at Portsmouth. Their stay, however, was very short, as, to prevent the vessel from sailing without them, they had engaged to return on board every night. Having, therefore, one evening preached, and taken leave of their friends, they proceeded about midnight toward their vessel, from which they were about seven miles distant. But this passage proved so tempestuous, that after rowing in their boat about two miles, their pilot advised them to return, and take up their lodgings during the remaining part of the night on board a yacht which lay near them, of which he had the command. To do this he thought they might presume with safety, as the same cause which prevented them from reaching their vessel would detain her in the harbour.

The severity of the weather being somewhat abated toward the morning, they hastened on board their own ship very early, expecting to put speedily to sea; but a train of adverse circumstances compelled them to lie at anchor for eight days more. On Thursday, the 5th of October, they were exposed to one of the most tremendous storms that the neighbouring inhabitants had remembered on the coast for many years. During this tempest, a small sloop got entangled with one of their cables, and for some time both vessels were threatened with serious damage, if not with mutual destruction. But from this danger, also, the God whom winds and seas obey, wrought out a deliverance for them.

On finding their present situation rather precarious, and discovering no prospect of sailing, they seized a favourable opportunity on the 11th, of weighing anchor, and of removing to Yarmouth harbour, in the Isle of Wight. But this was not sufficient to secure them from hazard. On the following day they were in the most

imminent danger of being run down by a frigate, the captain of which, on perceiving their situation, drew her so near the shore, in order to preserve them, that she ran aground. But, as it was a soft muddy bottom, she was got off on the following tide, without sustaining any damage.

On finding the weather grow more serene and settled, they once more weighed anchor, and began their voyage; and on the 14th, got off the Land's End. As the wind blew in a favourable direction, although every day brought with it squalls and tempests, they made considerable progress, and flattered themselves that they should soon accomplish their voyage, and take their leave of storms and seas. But in these hopes they were disappointed.

On the morning of the 17th their attention was arrested by a most alarming circumstance that was deeply interesting to all. On sounding the well, it was found that the vessel had admitted an unusual quantity of water; and on searching for the cause, it was discovered that she had sprung a leak in a part which lay under the cabin. This was a serious affair, as they were far from any harbour, and were approaching nearly toward the middle of the Atlantic. The captain and mate, on examining the leak, found it of such a nature that it could not be repaired while they were at sea. But providentially it was above the regular surface of the sea, and only admitted water when the vessel inclined to that side, under the pressure of the breeze. In addition to this, it was not of sufficient magnitude to endanger their lives, as the pumps could easily command it, provided it was not enlarged; but of this they were very apprehensive, the weather having assumed a very menacing aspect. Night approaching, all the hatches were obliged to be shut, as the cabin windows had been for some days before, to prevent the vessel from being filled with the turbulent waves, that seemed to ride on one another. At the prospect before them the sailors were evidently alarmed, for this evening, for the first time, they joined the missionaries in family prayer.

But it was not till the night of the 26th the tempest reached the zenith of its fury, so as to surpass all that

they had hitherto experienced. The captain was of opinion that this was a more tempestuous night than any he recollected for ten years past. Although the severity of the wind had prevented them from spreading any sail, they were very apprehensive that their mainmast would be carried away through its violence. And in order to prevent the fatal consequences that would probably ensue from such an accident, about midnight they got two hatchets in readiness to cut it away, as soon as they found such a melancholy expedient necessary. Providentially, the masts and rigging rode out the storm; but their pleasure in the morning, to find the gale abated, was counteracted by a discovery that the labouring of the ship had increased the leak. Her violent straining had also so far injured the rigging, that on Sunday, the 25th of November, one of the mainstays of the mainmast broke, and it had not been long repaired before the other also gave way. Both, however, were secured, and every precaution was taken to provide for still severer storms, which were fully anticipated from these awful presages.

On Thursday, the 30th, a dreadful gale blew from the north-west, which more than realized all their apprehension. "At ten at night," says Dr. Coke, "I heard the captain's wife cry out in a most dreadful fright; and presently one of the passengers came running, and crying, 'Pray for us, doctor, pray for us, for we are just gone.' I came out of my room, and found that a dreadful hurricane had just arisen. The ship was on her beam ends. They had not time to take down the foresail, and were just going to cut away the mainmast as the last remedy, expecting every moment the ship would be filled with water, and sink. My brethren and myself, at this awful moment, retired into a corner to pray, and I think we may all say we felt a perfect resignation to the will of God. Through grace I think I may assert that I was entirely delivered from the fear of death. But brother Hammet was superior to us all in faith for the occasion. His first prayer, if it could be called by that name, was little less than a declaration of the full assurance he possessed, that God would deliver us; and his second address was a thanksgiving for our deliverance. It was not till after this, and after we had sung

a hymn together, that the foresail was shivered in pieces, and by that means the masts were saved, and probably the ship itself. It is awful to hear the captain, and one of the passengers who was on deck during this tremendous tempest, give a relation of it. It appeared to them, as if the clouds, the air, and the water were all mixed together. After the immediate danger was over, we drove with the wind, which carried us, with nothing but the bare poles, at the rate of six miles an hour, for eight hours and a half."*

The 4th of December was succeeded by a dreadful night. Terror and dismay prevailed throughout the ship; so that the sailors, like the messengers of Job, succeeded one another with dismal tidings, that the ropes were breaking, and the rigging was giving way before the irresistible tempest. The hatches were again closed, as they had been twice before; and in addition to the leak, which now admitted a dangerous stream, the water began to ooze at almost every joint of the ship. The sails, having been so long exposed to the storm, and to the mountainous waves, were reduced almost as thin as wafers; and the ropes, having all the tar beaten off, were washed nearly white; so that, taken all together, the vessel was almost half a wreck. Their candles likewise were nearly all consumed; and, from the length of time they had been on their voyage, their water was so far expended, that all were obliged to go on a stated allowance.

In this dismal state of things, a council was held the ensuing morning, when the captain announced his opinion that, from the condition in which the ship appeared, it would be utterly impracticable for them to reach Halifax during the winter; especially as they had scarcely advanced more than one hundred and twenty miles during the last three weeks, and they were now lying almost at the mercy of the waves. He therefore advised, as the only step that could be taken to preserve their lives, and keep the ship from foundering, that they should immediately alter their course, and proceed with all possible expedition to the West Indies. In these

* Dr. Coke's journal, p. 54.

opinions the voices of all were unanimous, and the shattered vessel immediately took a new direction.

Having taken these resolutions, they found the elements more propitious to their designs. They were, therefore, soon wafted and drifted from the banks of Newfoundland into a warmer region.

During this tempestuous weather, they saw no ship that could render them any assistance, in case they had been reduced to the last extremity. A remarkable phenomenon, however, appeared a few days before they had determined to sail for the West Indies, in which superstition might easily discern an omen of their future disasters. The captain, and all who were on deck, discovered very distinctly, in the dead of the night, a light, such as that which vessels hold out when they pass each other. This was so near, that the captain, who thought it to be the light of an approaching ship, concluded it was within hail, and called for his speaking trumpet to make inquiries. But before the trumpet could be brought, the light disappeared, and nothing remained but the darkness of the night, the howling of the tempest, and the roaring of the sea. Whether this was a meteor of the storm, or the light of some ship that was in still greater distress, and that sunk for ever beneath the waves when the light became extinguished, it is impossible to say. But that such a light was visible, and continued so for some time, was attested by the captain, and by all that were on deck, who were eye witnesses of the phenomenon.

But if this presage was calculated to alarm the sailors, it was soon succeeded by another that was more indubitable, and that animated the hopes of all. On the morning of the 15th, the clouds appeared in majestic columns, exhibiting a degree of silent splendour which the northern regions have never been permitted to witness. On the same day a tropic bird appeared in sight, displaying its beautiful plumage to the sun, and furnishing a sure prognostic that they were approaching the harbours of the West Indies. During the whole of this tempestuous voyage, divine service was regularly performed every Sunday by one of the missionaries, whenever the weather would permit. But it was only in mo-

ments of particular distress that any beside themselves could be induced to join in the solemnities of devotion; and little, if any, real good was apparent from their united labours while on board. At first the violence of the weather rendered them, through sickness, wholly unfit for public religious duties. But after some time had elapsed, they became so inured to their situation, that the dangers with which they were encircled, assumed a less terrifying aspect. During these tedious days, Dr. Coke attended to the study of the French language, and enlivened his spirits in the intervals of devotion with such works of science and genius as he had on board; so that on the whole, in these respects, his time glided on in a manner less irksome than might have been expected.

But it was not exclusively with the elements he had to contend; nor was it *their* violence alone that called for the exercise of his patience. On Sunday, the 29th of October, he preached to the passengers and sailors, and in the progress of his discourse delivered his sentiments with more plainness than some on board were disposed to receive with a becoming spirit. Among these was a gay irreligious young gentleman, who was so offended that after service he retired into his cabin, and in a surly note informed the doctor that, as he was not his pastor, he insisted on receiving the usage which, as a passenger and a gentleman, he had a right to claim. On the ground of politeness Dr. Coke was called upon to reply; but his language being conciliatory and pacific, the breach was soon healed, and harmony was again restored.

The behaviour of this passenger was in reality far less ferocious than that which he experienced from the captain of the ship, without giving him any personal provocation. It has often been observed that British sailors, notwithstanding their courage has long been proverbial, are in many instances strongly tinctured with superstition. Of this fact the following circumstance, frequently mentioned by Dr. Coke, though not recorded by him in his journal, furnishes a convincing testimony.

It was during the utmost violence of the tempest, while accomplishing their perilous voyage, that Dr.

Coke and his associates addressed themselves to God in prayer for the preservation of the ship and of the lives of all on board. The captain, instead of approving their piety, or joining in their devotions, became visibly agitated, and betrayed symptoms of an approaching storm within; attributing the calamities with which they were surrounded to the means made use of to avert the growing danger. At first he paraded the deck, muttering in a species of audible whisper, "We have a Jonah on board—we have a Jonah on board;" and consequently it was natural for him to conclude that a Jonah's conduct deserved a Jonah's fate. In this condition he continued until his fears, superstition, credulity, and agitation had wound him up to such a state of phrensy, that he entered the doctor's cabin, and, in a paroxysm of fury, seizing his books and papers, threw them immediately into the sea. He was about to proceed farther, but on seizing "the Jonah," he satiated his vengeance, by grasping him with angry violence several times, and by giving loose to his passion in expressions of horrible imprecations. He did not in fact offer him any farther outrage; yet, on retiring, he swore that if ever the doctor made another prayer on board his ship, he was fully resolved to throw him into the sea, as he had thrown his papers. But this gust of passion was of no long continuance. The removal of danger soothed the spirit of superstition to rest, and the cessation of the storm without reduced to a calm the tempest that raged within.

Amid all these distresses the subject of this memoir found his mind stayed upon God; and, with eternity full in view, he had an eye to the recompense of reward. The state of his soul may be gathered from his own words, which he inserted in his journal at a moment when their situation was most critical, and the boiling deep seemed yawning to receive its destined prey. "This morning," he observes, "we found that the leak lets in more water than it did yesterday. I retired in the morning to meditate seriously on that circumstance. I considered, what reason have I to desire to live? I have really forsaken all for Christ, and have neither motive nor desire to live, but for the church of Christ.

And why should my desires be so strong on that account? With what perfect ease can the Lord fill up my province with one that is infinitely better qualified? I am therefore willing to die. I do love my God, and have an indubitable assurance that whatever is wanting he will fully supply before he takes me into a world of spirits."*

In this happy and tranquil state of soul his days and hours glided on in the midst of surrounding agitations. But that God who gathered the winds in his fists, and bound the waters in a garment, had reserved him for farther usefulness in his church; and, after exposing him thus to complicated trials, and bringing the blind by a way that he knew not, he conducted him to an unexpected field of labour in the West Indies. Their weather-beaten bark, after having survived every storm, cast anchor in the harbour of Antigua, on December 25, 1786.

CHAPTER IX.

Primary introduction of Methodism into the West Indies by Mr. Gilbert—Succeeded by Mr. Baxter, whom Dr. Coke found in Antigua—Visits Dominica, St. Vincent's, St. Christopher's, Nevis, and St. Eustatius—History of black Harry—State of religion, and pleasing prospects of establishing missions in these islands—Sails to the continent—State of religion in South Carolina—Preaching in the forests—Suspends his public testimony against slavery—Escape from persecution—State of religion throughout Virginia—Reasons why the rule against slavery was suspended—Returns to Ireland—In danger of being lost between Ireland and England—Observations on providence—Engages to beg from door to door for the missions—In danger of being lost sailing to the Norman Isles—Reflections on the general progress of religion.

Although the arrival of Dr. Coke and his associates in the West Indies may be said to form an era in the history of Methodism, and to lay the foundation of its general introduction into that archipelago, it was not wholly unknown to all the islands prior to this eventful period. But since its primary appearance is closely

* Dr. Coke's journal, p. 53.

connected with the narrative that follows, it will be necessary to take a retrospective survey of the singular circumstances by which divine Providence has been pleased to work, in order to spread among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Among the legislators that were appointed to manage the civil affairs of Antigua, about thirty years prior to this period, Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq., sustained the character of speaker of the house of assembly. This gentleman, having injured his health by a long residence in this warm climate, found himself under a necessity of repairing to England for the recovery of his strength. On his arrival in England, the fame of Mr. Wesley's preaching arrested his attention; and, instead of relying on mere report, from which he could gather no satisfactory information, he resolved to hear for himself. It does not appear that he was actuated by mere idle curiosity; for, as his health was in a precarious state, and his eyes were somewhat opened to see the solemnities of eternity, he was anxious to receive instruction respecting the salvation of his soul.

Attending on Mr. Wesley's preaching in the sincerity and the simplicity of his heart, it pleased God to accompany his word with a peculiar blessing, by confirming his convictions, and by directing his wounded spirit to behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Refreshed by the consolations of divine grace, and finding his health tolerably well established, he repaired again to Antigua in the year 1760. On his arrival, he saw his fellow countrymen buried in sin; and perceived with sorrow that the neglected negroes were living without hope and without God in the world. With these views before him, and being animated with the love of God shed abroad in his heart, he formed a resolution of making an effort to call sinners to repentance. He accordingly began by collecting together a few persons in his own house, with whom he first prayed, and whom he then exhorted to flee from the wrath to come. The report of his singular conduct soon augmented the number of his hearers, and awakened the curiosity of the principal inhabitants throughout the island.

But it was not to these alone that he confined his labours. The negroes in a state of slavery shared in his benevolent designs. Regardless, therefore, of that reproach to which he might be exposed from the elevated rank which he sustained, he went boldly forth in the name of God, and proclaimed redemption to the slaves through the blood of Christ. This was the first effort that was ever made to introduce the doctrines of the gospel, as taught by Mr. Wesley, among the swarthy inhabitants of the torrid zone. The reproach, the contempt, and the calumny which he had anticipated, soon followed; so that he found himself, like that Saviour whom he recommended, despised and rejected of men. To preach to the whites was a deed that was scarcely to be tolerated; but to descend from them to notice the slaves was considered so much beneath his dignity and official character, that very few were disposed to view him in a favourable light.

But, amid these torrents of reproach, God was pleased so to own and bless his labours, that a society of nearly two hundred members was soon raised up through his instrumentality. These, being turned from seeking death in the error of their ways, to serve the living God, were the seals that crowned his early ministry. But such are the mysterious dispensations of divine Providence, that, in the midst of his usefulness, he was arrested by the hand of death, and taken to those regions where piety and a zeal for God shall never be exposed, either to the shafts of calumny or the slanders of interested malevolence.

The death of Mr. Gilbert left his followers in a forlorn condition. Exposed to temptations and dangers on every side, and having no earthly friend to whom they could look for assistance, many turned again to the vices which they had abandoned; others grew weary in well doing; and some were satisfied with having a name to live, even while their souls were dead to God. Some few, indeed, continued steadfast and immovable amid conflicting storms and trials, and some were taken by death to a triumphant reward.

In this state of fluctuation and uncertainty the infant and half expiring work remained until the year 1778,

when another opportunity presented itself to the inhabitants of hearing the sound of the glorious gospel. The dock yard at Antigua being in want of shipwrights, an application was made to the government at home for some suitable persons to be sent from England to supply the deficiencies. Among the persons selected for this purpose was a Mr. John Baxter, of the Royal Dock at Chatham, who, having received his appointment, repaired to Antigua without delay. Mr. Baxter, prior to this time, had been a member of the Methodist society about twelve years; and, previous to his departure, had been a class leader for some considerable time; and, for several years, as a local preacher, had called sinners to repentance.

On his arrival at English Harbour, in Antigua, he discovered that the sacred flame which had been kindled near twenty years before by Mr. Gilbert's ministry was not yet extinguished, although it emitted only feeble rays. But the state in which he found religion, the remnants of Mr. Gilbert's society, the means by which they had been kept together through this long and tedious night, and the prospect of success which lay before him, Mr. Baxter thus describes in the following letter, addressed to Mr. Wesley:—

"On Thursday, April 2d, 1778, I arrived at English Harbour. On Friday, the 3d, I went to St. John's, and waited on Mr. H., who received me kindly. The next day Mr. H. went with me to see our friends. The work that God began by Mr. Gilbert is still remaining. The black people have been kept together by two black women, who have continued praying and meeting with those who attended every night. I preached to about thirty on Saturday night; on Sunday morning to about the same number, and in the afternoon of the same day to about four or five hundred. The old members desire that I would inform you that you have many children in Antigua, whom you never saw. I hope we shall have an interest in your prayers, and that our Christian friends will pray for us. Last Saturday I again visited St. John's, and preached to a fashionable company of white women, while the back room was full of blacks, who are athirst for the gospel. On the following day

I preached to a large concourse of people that filled both the house and the yard."

Eight years had elapsed from the date of the preceding letter to the arrival of Dr. Coke; during which time Mr. Baxter devoted all the leisure hours which his avocations would allow to the work of the ministry. In these solitary labours, although God was pleased to bless his ministry, he was not without his share of reproach for adhering steadily to the cause of Christ, but neither the scoffs of calumny, nor the pernicious evening dews, through which he was frequently compelled to travel, when returning from the plantations after preaching to the negroes, were able to shake his steadfastness. As his ministerial labours increased, and the claims of an augmented society demanded more attention, God was pleased to send him assistance, which tended greatly to promote the gracious work. Among these the arrival of Mrs. Gilbert from England was of considerable importance. And to her were added a pious emigrant and his family from Ireland, who were conducted to the island through a train of disastrous circumstances far more calamitous than those which drove Dr. Coke on its shores.*

Unwearied in his exertions, and favoured with the smiles of an indulgent Providence, Mr. Baxter persevered until the year 1783, when the topstone of the first Methodist chapel that ever appeared in the torrid zone announced a building finished for the worship of the eternal God. From this period till the arrival of Dr. Coke, the work continued to flourish. New places were offered for preaching in various parts of the island; but it was only to a few, and even to those which were more immediately connected with the place of his residence, that Mr. Baxter's circumstances would permit him to attend. Yet even in this local sphere of action nearly two thousand persons had joined his society prior to Dr. Coke's arrival, and before any regular missions were established in any part of the West Indies.

* For a detailed account of the sufferings of this Irish family, and of the progress of the work of God in Antigua in its early stages, see Dr. Coke's history of this island, in his History of the West Indies.

This indefatigable man, at the request of Dr. Coke, was, after some time, prevailed upon to relinquish his worldly pursuits, and to give himself wholly to the ministry. In this situation he continued to labour in various parts, with an unblemished reputation, till the year 1805, when he exchanged this state of probation for a crown and kingdom that fade not away.

It has been observed in the concluding sentence of the preceding chapter that Dr. Coke landed at Antigua on December 25th, 1786, thus carrying to the West Indies, through a train of mysterious providences, the light of the gospel, on that very day on which we celebrate the nativity of the Saviour of mankind. Dr. Coke, on walking up the town of St. John's, met Mr. Baxter in the street, proceeding to the chapel to perform divine service. Their mutual joy at this unexpected meeting is more easily to be conceived than described. Mr. Baxter was unknown to the doctor in person, but an interchange of names soon called forth a congeniality of spirit and an unreservedness of communication.

Regardless of the fatigue which the dangerous voyage had occasioned, the duties of the day immediately devolved on Dr. Coke, who readily engaged in his Master's service. In the forenoon he read prayers, preached, and administered the sacrament; and in the afternoon and evening he preached again to a congregation which the report of his arrival had considerably augmented. But the dispositions of the people, the manner in which he was received, and the flattering prospects which appeared, may be more fully gathered from his own words:—

"January 5th, 1787. I have preached in this town twice a day. The house used to be filled in the evenings about an hour before the time of preaching, and I have made it a rule to begin about half an hour before the time. Our society in this island is nearly two thousand; but the ladies and gentlemen of the town have so filled the house that the poor dear negroes who built it have been almost entirely shut out, except in the mornings; and yet they bear this, not only with patience, but with joy. Two or three times I have preached in the country. Our friends who invite us to

their houses entertain us rather like princes than subjects; herein perhaps lies part of our danger in this country. The scenery is very romantic. The cocoa tree is very magnificent; and the milk which the nuts yield is most cooling and delicious. Every thing is new, and therefore the more pleasing."

Flattered with the doctor's presence, and pleased with his manner of preaching, the inhabitants expressed an anxiety to detain him in the island; but he was not to be purchased at any price which they had in their power to offer. As a mark of their esteem, he was invited to a public dinner by the merchants of the island, in company with the other missionaries. The present duke of Clarence, who then commanded a frigate which lay in the harbour, was present at this entertainment. In the course of this day it was intimated to Dr. Coke by a gentleman with whom he dined, that if five hundred a year would remunerate his services, he should not leave the island. His soul, however, which was solely bent on spreading more extensively the Redeemer's kingdom, was above the reach of any pecuniary temptation.

But although Dr. Coke could not be induced to remain on the island, he was so far satisfied Mr. Baxter needed assistance in his labours, that he readily consented for one of the missionaries to stay behind. And, from the representations which were given of the state of the other islands, he observes he had "no doubt that it would be an open resistance to the clear providences of the Almighty to remove any one of the missionaries at present from this country."

Having held an infant conference, and received invitations to St. Vincent's and St. Christopher's; and learning that the prospect of establishing a mission in St. Eustatius was highly flattering, Dr. Coke and his associates, in company with Mr. Baxter, who was well known in several islands, prepared to pay them a personal visit, that he might judge of their condition, and establish his companions as circumstances might direct. To do this he was the more solicitous, that, on his return to England, he might lay before Mr. Wesley a statement from actual observation, in order that some more permanent provision might be made for the spi-

ritual welfare of the inhabitants in future. They accordingly left Antigua on the evening of the 5th of January, and reached Dominica on the 7th, this being an island at which the captain with whom they sailed had some occasion to touch. Having no letter of recommendation to any person here, the captain, who knew their errand, directed them to a Mr. Burn, a gentleman of his acquaintance, as one who would most probably favour their designs. Mr. Burn received them with much politeness, and gave them an assurance that he would readily entertain the missionary that should be sent; that the negroes on his estates should be at liberty to receive instructions; that there were about four hundred slaves in his neighbourhood; and that he doubted not their masters would readily co-operate with him in this benevolent undertaking.

On this island they found two serious negroes, who had formerly belonged to the Moravians in Antigua. In the barracks they also discovered two serious soldiers, who had belonged to the Methodist society in Ireland. And in Roseau, the capital, they were introduced to a friendly mulatto lady, with whom Mr. Baxter had formerly an acquaintance in Antigua. All these were highly delighted with the prospect that they were once more to hear the sound of the gospel. In the house of this mulatto lady, Dr. Coke preached to as large a congregation as it would contain, all of whom behaved with the utmost decorum, and gave deep attention. These were auspicious beginnings, which seemed even more flattering than their most sanguine expectations had induced them to entertain.

As their stay was regulated by that of the vessel, they went on board, after tarrying about two days, and sailing by Martinico and St. Lucia, landed at Kingston, in St. Vincent's, on the 9th. Mr. Baxter, being well known to several in this island, introduced them on their arrival to a Mr. Claxton, who had, many years before, been awakened by Mr. Gilbert's ministry in Antigua. His house was immediately opened for preaching, and a large congregation soon assembled. On going into the country, another gentleman, to whom they were recommended, received them with much satisfaction, opening

at the same time a large parlour for the reception of a congregation that assembled. To this congregation Dr. Coke also preached, and, after informing them that it was their intention Mr. Clarke should remain on the island, this gentleman, whose name was Clapham, gave him a general invitation to his house, and offered for his accommodation a large boarded room, in which the negroes might at all times assemble. From another gentleman, on whom they called in their way, they met with treatment equally civil, and with similar encouragement.

In the meanwhile Mr. Claxton, in whose house Dr. Coke had preached at Kingston, was not idle during their absence in the country. On their return, they found that he had fitted up a large warehouse, with seats for the congregation, and two rooms for Mr. Clarke, one for his bedchamber, and the other for his study. On waiting on the president of the council, who acted as governor, they were treated with the utmost politeness, receiving from him his best wishes for their success, and an offer of the court house for public worship on Sundays. In other parts of this town they found many persons of property and high respectability, who promised them their friendship and protection; so that a circuit seemed instantly laid out, which would nearly engross all Mr. Clarke's time. On visiting the barracks they discovered seven soldiers who were deeply serious. They had erected a hut within the barracks for their public and private meetings; and they invariably met together every morning at five o'clock, unless prevented by military duties. But although these were permitted to enjoy their privileges without interruption, liberty for Mr. Clarke to preach in the barracks was a favour that Dr. Coke could not procure from the commander.

As to the negroes at large, "it is surprising," says Dr. Coke, "with what affection they look upon us when we pass by them: one of them was overheard telling his companions, 'These men were imported for us.' The whites also in general appeared friendly to the undertaking; and before Dr. Coke left the island, six of these were formed into a class, independently of the pious soldiers that were found in the barracks.

From this combination of favourable circumstances Dr. Coke drew the following very natural conclusion: "It is impossible to have any doubt concerning the will of God, in respect to the appointment of a missionary for this island; in respect to Antigua and St. Vincent's, all is as clear as if it were written with a sunbeam."

On leaving the romantic island of St. Vincent's, they touched again at Dominica, and seized this opportunity of waiting on the governor, to state to him the object which they had in view. By this gentleman they were received, not merely with the parade of polite civility, but with marks of approbation for engaging in so benevolent a design as that of instructing the negroes in the principles and duties of the Christian religion. This interview introduced them to another gentleman of the island, who not only expressed his approbation, but promised to give the missionary his protection, and to contribute toward his support.

From paying this transient visit to Dominica, they next proceeded to St. Christopher's; but their arrival, which was on Thursday, the 18th, had been anticipated, in consequence of some information that had been transmitted from Antigua; and some preparations were made for their reception. A lodging being provided, and a house in which they were to preach being prepared, before they came on shore, furnished a pleasing presage of the treatment they were likely to experience. Dr. Coke preached in the evening of the same day, and found the congregation, both in respectability and behaviour, perfectly correspondent with the hopes which had been excited. But as an opportunity presented itself for their visiting Nevis, they repaired thither on the next day, intending to return as soon as they had ascertained, in some degree, the dispositions of the inhabitants of that island toward them.

Arriving at Nevis, they were received with politeness, and treated with respect; but for the grand object of their mission, they could find no prospect of a favourable reception. For, although they had taken with them several letters of recommendation, every door appeared to be shut against their efforts; so that on the whole they were led to conclude that this was the most useless,

as well as the most expensive step they had hitherto taken; and full of these reflections they returned to St. Christopher's.

But the result of experience does not always concur with the partial decisions of reason. Neither momentary impulses nor momentary appearances can justly be considered as the criterion of fact. These simple truths have since been exemplified in the case of Nevis. On their arrival at St. Christopher's, although they had concluded their visit to Nevis to be useless, they received an invitation from a member of the legislative assembly there, for Mr. Hammet, who was to be stationed in St. Christopher's, to come thither and preach. A son also of the president of the council concurred in the invitation, and offered his house for preaching, whenever Mr. Hammet could make it convenient to come to their island. And subsequent events have proved, from the success of the gospel in Nevis, that whatever secret causes might have conspired to shut the door against the missionaries on their first visit, they did not arise from the dispositions of the inhabitants being radically hostile to its principles. Nevis continues, even to the present day, to furnish evidences in favour of vital religion which other islands, that at first presented a more flattering appearance, cannot boast.

Returning to St. Christopher's, the court house was thrown open for their reception, and both Mr. Hammet and Dr. Coke preached in it to very crowded audiences. Among the respectable inhabitants who attended, six or seven invited them to their houses. To some of these, among whom was the minister of the parish, they paid visits, and found them willing to promote their benevolent intentions. In *Basse Terre*, which is the capital, some friends were instantly found, who engaged to rent a house for Mr. Hammet, so that this town was already become his place of abode. On Wednesday, the 24th, they proceeded to Sandy Point, another part of the same island, and here also they received flattering promises and encouragement to proceed. Every thing thus far appeared to favour their wishes, and even to furnish indubitable evidence that God had called them to establish missionaries among the myriads whom in every

island they found sitting in heathenish darkness, and in the shadow of death.

In St. Eustatius, which belonged to the Dutch, although the storms of persecution, and a train of adverse circumstances, soon blasted all their hopes, their expectations were not less sanguine than in any island which they had hitherto visited. To this, therefore, they directed their course, and landed on its shores with letters of recommendation on the evening of the 24th. Scarcely had they reached the land before they were accosted by two black men, who asked "if they belonged to the brethren?" Dr. Coke, thinking that they meant the Moravians, endeavoured to rectify their mistake, at the same time hinting that they belonged to the same common family of God. They were, however, soon given to understand that the blacks had made no mistake; for having received information from St. Christopher's of their intention to visit them, they had anticipated their coming, and were waiting their arrival. They had accordingly prepared a house for their reception, which they called their home, and had united together to defray the expense of their journey. To this house they were therefore conducted, and entertained by the free blacks with the greatest hospitality.

A conduct so liberal and benevolent from men of this description could scarcely fail to awaken their solicitude as to the principle by which they were actuated. This led to a discovery that, some time previous to their arrival, a slave had been imported from the continent of America, whose heart had been penetrated by divine grace, and who had been a member of the Methodist society prior to his removal. *Harry*, for that was his name, on arriving at Eustatius, found himself in a solitary condition. He was without any spiritual associates, and totally destitute of all public means of grace. To supply these deficiencies to the utmost of his power, he assumed courage; and, among his companions in fetters, bore a public testimony for Christ. The novelty of his preaching soon collected a number of hearers; and among these, the governor of the island, on one occasion, paid a visit to his homely temple. This gentleman, approving of what he heard, and expressing his appro-

bation, gave his sanction in an indirect manner to Harry's preaching, and thus sheltered him from persecution, against which a slave can demand no protection, and for which he can find no redress.

Thus sanctioned, Harry continued to preach until his word was attended with such power that many of the slaves were so deeply affected as to fall under its influence, and to remain in a state of stupor for some hours. This circumstance created an alarm among the planters; and the propriety of his preaching was viewed in a very questionable light. It happened one night, not long before Dr. Coke's arrival, that, during Harry's preaching, no less than sixteen were affected in this extraordinary manner. This gave the finishing blow to his ministry. He was ordered to appear immediately before the governor; and was forbidden by him to preach any more, under very severe penalties. The same governor would have flogged as well as silenced him, if the supreme judge had not interposed to mitigate the severity of his intentions. Harry had been made instrumental in deeply awakening about twenty souls; and it is somewhat singular that Dr. Coke landed on the same day he had been doomed to silence.

Receiving this public mandate, this pious slave could no more presume to preach; but thinking, after some considerable time, that the ferment had subsided, he again ventured to pray with his associates, without conceiving that this was a breach of the orders he had received. In this, however, it seems he was deceived. An information being lodged against him to the governor, he was again cited to appear before him to receive his sentence. This sentence was, that he should be publicly whipped; after which he was to be imprisoned for a given time; and when released, to be banished from the island. As his crime was considered of a flagrant nature, he was whipped in a most unmerciful manner, under the direction of Isaac de Lion, a black man, who was the public executioner of all the cruel edicts of the island, but who, on Dr. Coke's first visit, had treated him with much kindness. Harry, having heard his sentence, received it with submissive meekness, and bore the lacerations of the whip with

Christian fortitude. From the whipping post he was taken to prison; and, after having remained in confinement during his appointed time, was removed in a secret manner; but to what place, his weeping friends were not able to discover. About ten years the fate of this deeply injured, but happy man, remained an impenetrable secret; nor was it thought that it would ever be developed until the sea should give up its dead. In the year 1796, when Dr. Coke was on the American continent, he had an opportunity of knowing that Harry was not only alive, but free. Of this fact, and of his interview with him, he gives the following account:—

"One evening, after preaching at a place on the continent, a black man followed me into my chamber, whom I immediately recognized to be Harry, of St. Eustatius. He informed me that the ship in which he was transported from the island had brought a cargo of slaves to the continent, where he had since resided, without being exposed to that brutality which he had suffered in former years. Through all these changes, and the lapse of time, he seemed to have retained his piety and his zeal. He is useful in the society of which he is a member, at the prayer meetings, and other private assemblies. And thus an answer has been given from heaven to the petitions of many thousands in England, who at one time with great fervour spread his case before the Lord."

Dr. Coke, on his arrival at St. Eustatius, was immediately solicited by his friends to preach; but, finding himself under a foreign government, which, in the silence it had imposed that day on Harry, presented itself in a doubtful light, he hesitated to comply with their request, before he had presented himself to the governor, to explain his intentions. But so eager were their importunities, that the persons who had voluntarily assembled could not be persuaded to separate until they had sung twice and he had prayed three times with them.

On presenting himself before the judge, Dr. Coke was informed that he and his associates must be silent until the court had determined whether they should be tolerated or not. They were also commanded to prepare their credentials, that they might be presented to the

court, to be taken into consideration on the ensuing Saturday. This was accordingly done; and they were afterward informed that their principles at least gave apparent satisfaction. On the following day Dr. Coke received a private message, that the captain and council were desirous to hear him preach in the afternoon. This summons he obeyed; and so fully were they satisfied with the truth of what they heard, that in the evening the interpreter of the court sent one of his black servants to receive instruction preparatory to baptism. But in the midst of these pleasing externals they could plainly perceive from the caution which was observed, that the establishment of a mission in the island was by no means likely to meet the approbation of the government. And, although the people appeared more desirous of hearing the gospel than any other whom they had hitherto visited in the West Indies, they were under the necessity of taking a painful leave, after commending them to God and the word of his grace, and forming such as appeared desirous of receiving instruction into classes, which were committed to the care of the most suitable persons that could be found.

The scene which presented itself at their final separation was truly affecting. Both parties found their desires mutually disappointed, through the obstacles which an arbitrary government had thrown in their way. Their sorrow, however, was somewhat alleviated with the pleasing anticipation that the clouds which now hovered over them would soon disperse; and that, on some future day, they should meet again without apprehending an interruption from the mandates of power. And finally, that if, through the inscrutable dispensations of divine Providence, these hopes were never to be realized, they anticipated with mutual joy the approach of that day which should place them in a state "where tyrants vex not and the weary rest."

From this island Dr. Coke was about to sail to the continent; but previously to his departure he was so laden with fruits, jellies, and other evidences of their bounty, that during the voyage, which lasted nearly three weeks, although eight persons partook of the common stock, the ample store was not exhausted. Nor

was it scarcely possible to prevent this profusion of their generosity, as each person considered the acceptance of his contribution, or the rejection of it, as the criterion of the affection or disapprobation which Dr. Coke entertained toward him. Both rich and poor, therefore, united in this peculiar testimony of respect, and he took his leave laden with their presents and good wishes, amid the prayers of the serious and the gratitude of all.

On the 10th of February, 1787, Dr. Coke sailed from St. Eustatius, on board of a Dutch ship that was bound for Charleston, in America. To this place he was anxious to repair, having been much longer absent from his continental friends than he first intended; and having seen sufficiently into the state of religion in the West Indies to enable him to give an interesting account to Mr. Wesley, on his return to England. On board of the ship in which he sailed, the greatest order and decency prevailed. His accommodations were highly pleasing; and the morals of the sailors were truly respectable. Nor was this a matter of much surprise, as the captain made it an invariable rule, unless prevented by the urgent duties of the ship, to read some portion of the Bible to his men every morning and evening during the voyage. In addition to this, they always had a sermon on Sundays, and their devotions were conducted with more than common solemnity. It is obvious from hence, that the conduct of the officers will always give a tone to the morals of a ship's crew. And although it is not in the power of any man to give religion to another, yet men in commanding stations may restrain public vice, without resorting to any coercive measures that can be deemed reprehensible. Precept is more powerful than violence; but example will impart instruction when all other measures fail of success.

Dr. Coke, after a pleasant voyage of eighteen days, landed at Charleston, and spent nearly a month with the infant society in that place. During his absence a church had been erected, which he now opened while he continued among them. It would contain about fifteen hundred persons; and such was the spirit of hearing excited among the inhabitants, that from three to

five hundred persons regularly attended at the morning preaching. Nor was it in this city alone that the spirit of hearing prevailed. At a conference, which was held in Charleston about a week prior to Dr. Coke's departure, he was informed by the preachers who attended, that throughout this state, and also that of Georgia, the prosperity of Zion was truly great. But peace and prosperity from without are frequently counterbalanced by domestic circumstances which tend to disturb the tranquillity that reigns within. Some leading characters, during Dr. Coke's absence, had suffered their minds to entertain prejudices to his disadvantage; so that their first interview was less cordial than might have been expected from the spirit in which they parted. This was, however, a transient cloud, which created only a momentary gloom, and then totally disappeared. An openness of communication expelled the demon of discord from their bosoms, and Christian friendship again resumed its place, leading them to a mutual co-operation, and causing the sacred flame to shed a more brilliant lustre than before.

In the state of South Carolina the work of God had experienced a gradual, but considerable revival, during Dr. Coke's absence to England and the West Indies. Nothing can place this in a stronger light than the contrast which now appeared. On his departure from the continent, on his previous visit, the whole circuit could furnish no more than twenty members in society; and from the cheerless prospects which it then exhibited, it was contemplated, in the conference, to abandon the circuit altogether. This, fortunately, was not done; and now the same circuit contained eight hundred and twenty-three members; and no less than twenty-two preaching houses had been erected during the preceding year. The people being scattered over a large tract of country, exposed the preachers who travelled among them to many serious inconveniences. The bogs and morasses, through which they had to pass, placed their lives in dangers of the most alarming nature. On an average they had to ride about one hundred miles a week, and to encounter difficulties to which those are utter strangers who have public roads and bridges to

preserve them from the quagmires and torrents which frequently intersect these deserts. It was in the month of April, Dr. Coke visited this circuit; and even then he was compelled sometimes to ride through water which, while he sat on horseback, reached above his knees. But through all these perils the gracious Lord preserved his faithful servants, and thus caused his work to prosper in their hands.

In the state of Virginia, independently of the chapels or preaching houses that had been erected in the towns, many had been built in central parts of the forests. In these Dr. Coke occasionally preached to large congregations, collected together from such distances as in England would seem incredible. The scenes which these vast assemblies, surrounded by hundreds of horses tied to the trees, exhibited, in the midst of a silent forest, were truly romantic; and the spirit of devotion which displayed itself under the gloom of the impending foliage thereby gave an additional feature to the solemnities of these occasions. From these places, although preaching was in the middle of the day, Dr. Coke was frequently obliged to travel till midnight before he could reach the house in which he was to lodge.

During his former visit to the continent, Dr. Coke had frequently lifted his voice against the slavery which was tolerated in the United States. This had exposed him to many perils. To some of these his eyes were fully open; but in several instances his danger lay concealed. The arm of legal power had been lifted against him; by a ferocious mob he had been secretly pursued; and the bullet of an assassin, who couched in ambush to take away his life, had been levelled at him. But from all these threatened and impending calamities he had been graciously preserved, through the overruling providence of God.

He was now informed, while passing through this county, that, from the spirited manner in which he had opposed this sanctioned enormity, when on his former visit, the slave-holders had been so exasperated as to present a bill against him to the grand jury. This bill was found; and although he had left the county at that time, no less than ninety persons engaged to pursue the

fugitive, and bring him back to colonial justice. But the task they had undertaken being too arduous for their accomplishment, they grew languid in their journey, and returned without success. In another county a similar bill was also presented to the jury; but it was thrown aside as too dishonourable to receive their official support. It was, notwithstanding, generally believed, by those who countenanced these bills, that the vigorous measures to which they had resorted, would so far operate upon Dr. Coke's fears as to prevent him from ever making his appearance again in these parts. But it was very evident from his actual presence that the friends of slavery might err.

Among those who had pursued Dr. Coke during the former visit, to prevent him from speaking against the slave trade, there was one who was resolved to adopt effectual measures. This man had armed himself with a gun, and had actually followed him with a fixed determination to deprive him of life as soon as an opportunity favourable to assassination presented itself. But almighty Goodness preserved the intended victim from the hour and the power of darkness, and brought this detestable design to light in a way that tends to exalt the riches of divine grace. The man who had thus contrived the destruction of Dr. Coke had been converted to God during his absence; and he now made a voluntary confession of the whole affair.

At Richmond the prejudices entertained against Dr. Coke were strong and violent, in consequence of the petition which had been presented to government for the emancipation of the slaves. This petition, which had been signed by a great number of freeholders, was supposed to have originated with him. He therefore was selected as an obnoxious individual, and many menaces prior to his arrival had been held out to deter him from coming. But none was sufficient to induce him to depart from the path of duty; and, boldly going forward in the name of his heavenly Master, instead of meeting with that interruption which had been predicted, and in part anticipated, the governor of the state directed the court house to be opened for his accom-

modation, in which place he preached to a congregation that was orderly, respectable, and attentive.

In proceeding from Richmond to Alexandria, a distance of about one hundred and twenty miles, as the Methodists had no societies at this time in these parts, Dr. Coke and his companions took their refreshment at such inns as they found on the road. In one of these they joined a company of gentlemen, and found themselves exposed to the following incident. On calling for some tea they fancied it tasted of rum. The second cup seemed to contain still more; so that they were satisfied something beside imagination had suggested the idea of this infusion. On making trial of a third cup, they found it so strongly impregnated that they were obliged to complain of a plot or conspiracy formed against them. But from what source it came they were never able to discover, as both the gentlemen and the waiter declared themselves totally innocent and ignorant of the affair.

At the conference which was held at Baltimore, in the month of April, it appeared from the various returns that were made, that during the preceding year no less than six thousand six hundred had been added to the societies throughout the United States. In the state of Kentucky, also, the work had assumed a pleasing and prosperous appearance; but the missionaries in this district could only prosecute their labours at the hazard of their lives, as the Indians in the vicinity had declared war, and waited in ambush to shoot and scalp such travellers as unfortunately fell into their hands. This statement was given in at the conference, and assistance was solicited. But under the circumstances of danger which existed no regular appointment could be made. Nor was there any occasion. A preacher who was present instantly volunteered his services in the midst of these frowns of war, and declared himself willing to expose his life by proclaiming salvation in the name of Christ. Another very shortly afterward, equally constrained by his love for souls, declared himself willing to venture on this arduous enterprise, and both were speedily sent to this distant and uncultivated region.

In Philadelphia, and in New-York, the work had so

increased that the places of worship were insufficient to contain the congregations, so that one more in each place was seriously contemplated. In most other parts the work was extensively prosperous, and, from their having, for a season, found it prudent to say nothing on the subject of the slave trade, Dr. Coke prosecuted his journeys through the states without any interruption.

To those who know nothing of the opinions which prevail in countries where slavery is sanctioned by law, this omission may appear as a temporizing measure, which an inhabitant of England may condemn. But until we are fully acquainted with the influence of local prejudices we must acknowledge ourselves incompetent to judge in this affair. Many things may be lawful that are not at all times expedient. And we have been taught by experience, in many instances, that the most effectual method to accomplish a desired purpose is to encircle it at a distance, and draw toward it by gradual and insensible approximations. The destruction of a powerful monster can only be effected by the united energies of time, ingenuity, perseverance, and art. If Dr. Coke had continued his direct attack upon the slave trade, he must have abandoned the United States, and desisted from his great work, without breaking the fetters which the Africans wore. But by observing a degree of prudent silence, which permitted him to preach the gospel, those causes were called into operation which must eventually establish more liberal principles, and finally emancipate the whole of the human race. It was in subservience to these enlarged views he acted in the silence which he now observed. The genuine conversion of a soul to God may be compared to the action of a file, which must gradually divide the links of the chain, and ultimately prove the means of obtaining freedom for every slave.

Dr. Coke having now surveyed several islands in the West Indies, and noticed the moral condition of their inhabitants; having also proceeded to the continent, and taken a survey of the glorious manner in which the work of God was spreading there, prepared once more to take his leave, that on his return to England he might report to Mr. Wesley the observations he had made.

He was also desirous of co-operating with him in sending missionaries into those places which seemed to have been opened by divine Providence; and with that view, of travelling through Great Britain, to entreat the benevolent to contribute toward their support. He then proceeded from New-York to Philadelphia, not finding a vessel in the former port to carry him across the Atlantic; but he found one at the latter that was bound for Dublin, in which place, if their voyage were prosperous, he hoped to meet Mr. Wesley. And after taking leave of his affectionate friends and numerous hearers in a farewell sermon, on the 27th of May, he went on board, and with agreeable companions arrived safely in Dublin bay, on the 25th of June, 1787, after a pleasant voyage of twenty-nine days.

Dr. Coke, on his arrival at Dublin, repaired immediately to the Irish conference. In this assembly of preachers, over whom Mr. Wesley presided, he communicated the pleasing intelligence which he had brought from the continent, and pointed out the circumstances under which he had been driven by successive storms to visit the islands in the West Indies. The brethren who were assembled, on hearing the detail of facts respecting the moral condition of the slaves, could not but concur with him in acknowledging the hand of Providence in giving directions to the natural causes which apparently produced the effect. All were therefore ready to admit the propriety of sending missionaries thither, so soon as suitable persons could be procured, and adequate means provided for their support.

From these preachers he had also the happiness to learn that in Ireland the cause of God had been blessed with much prosperity; that the converts of Zion were many; that the courts of justice had afforded them protection against the adversaries by whom they had been much injured on former occasions; and that they were permitted to worship God in most places without fearing, even from an unprincipled mob, any outrage for which they could not find redress. Being mutually stimulated to renewed exertions by these reciprocal recitals, they parted as soon as the common business of

the conference was despatched, resolving to spend and be spent in the cause of God.

Dr. Coke, on leaving his Irish friends, embarked in company with Mr. Wesley, and eleven preachers for the English conference, which was this year to be held in Manchester. But this voyage, though short, was attended with considerable danger. In the course of their passage, the vessel in which they sailed struck on a rock, from which it was with the utmost difficulty she could be rescued. Being driven upon it with considerable force, she became entangled among the crags ; and through the swelling of the waves, struck her bottom with different degrees of violence more than forty times. In this disastrous situation, while the sailors were using every effort for the preservation of the ship, and the lives of all on board, the servants of God betook themselves to prayer ; and, in a spirit of supplicating faith, cast themselves upon Him who alone can render physical means effectual, and counteract the tendencies of natural causes by the operation of others, ordinary or extraordinary, without disturbing the harmony of creation. After beating for some time against the protuberances of the rock, the vessel was at length relieved, and once more floated, without having sustained any material injury, so that they reached the place of their destination in safety.

On the present occasion we have as much reason to conclude that God attended to the supplications of his faithful servants, as that he blessed the exertions of the sailors with success. Interpositions of divine Providence are not unfrequently exerted above, but rarely in direct opposition to, all the established laws of nature ; for if this were the case, providence and miracle would be the same. It is through the use of all the means placed within our reach, that we may reasonably hope for the blessing of Heaven ; and to expect it on any other ground is a species of enthusiasm nearly allied to madness.

If Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, the other preachers, and the sailors had waited exclusively through prayer for a deliverance from the rock, without using any physical exertions, their conduct would not have been less reprehensible than that of the agriculturist who should give

himself wholly to devotion, and expect from divine Providence an advantageous harvest without cultivating the soil, or depositing his seed in the earth. God, who is the only absolute agent in existence, although he is necessarily what he is, is not necessitated in any of his actions. The laws by which both matter and spirit are regulated, are therefore under the control of Him

> "Who, from the realms of everlasting day,
> Sees all his works in one immense survey:"

and both these, and all finite agents, can always be made subservient to his vast designs. The belief, therefore, of a general and a particular providence, instead of being in any way inconsistent with the laws of nature, may coincide with them in all their various bearings, and be rationally incorporated in the grand economy of Heaven. Nature and providence frequently act by the same means and mediums; and they may be considered only as distinct modes through which the primary Agent displays his wisdom and his power.

The exertions which the Methodists at this time were making to procure missionaries, and to send them among the heathen, had so far excited the attention of piously disposed men as to induce some to address letters to Mr. Wesley, and others to apply, through the captains of trading vessels, for such missionary assistance as their several cases required. Mr. Wesley, who was deeply interested in the salvation of souls, beheld with eyes of pity the cases that were presented before him; but it was not in his power to meet their numerous and extensive demands.

The refugees in Nova Scotia had already received some missionaries from America, so that their case was less urgent than it had been, although the preachers who had sailed from England with Dr. Coke for those regions, had been stationed in the West Indies. From Newfoundland the invitations were too pressing to be resisted, although the means of supporting the missionaries whom they wished to send, were too dubious to demand implicit confidence. Mr. M'Geary was, however, sent to this extensive island to introduce among its scattered but numerous inhabitants the offers of

salvation which the gospel presents to a perishing world.

Newfoundland being now supplied by this appointment, the West Indies, from the representations of Dr. Coke, became the primary object of missionary importance to be considered at this conference. To this portion of the globe it was therefore determined that missionaries should be sent, as soon as some plan could be devised for their support. Dr. Coke, whose soul seemed to be absorbed in this department of the work, cheerfully undertook the cause of the poor negroes, and engaged to travel through the country to represent their condition to the benevolent of all denominations, and to beg from door to door. Nothing, he has frequently declared, could be more repugnant to his natural feelings than to become an avowed mendicant, which would at once expose him to the frowns of the covetous, the scoffs of the profane, and the sarcasms of infidelity. But on reviewing the cause in which he was engaged; on weighing the importance of the object which he had in view; on reflecting on the melancholy condition of the slaves; and on the prospect of success which promised to crown his efforts, he readily consented to suppress his feelings, and advocate the cause of all who were living without hope and without God in the world. In this glorious course he persevered until death gave consummation to his triumphs, and enrolled his name among the public benefactors of mankind.

Dr. Coke, at the conclusion of this conference, departed from Manchester on the 6th of August, 1787, in company with Mr. Wesley and Mr. Bradford, to visit the Norman Islands, that he might be enabled to see how the work of God had flourished during his absence. But even in this short voyage, they were exposed to perils not less imminent than those from which they had been delivered while coming from Ireland.

On the 11th of August they sailed from Southampton; but contrary winds and stormy weather obliged them to seek refuge, first in the port of Yarmouth, in the Isle of Wight, and afterward in that of Sevanage. On the afternoon of the 14th, the weather appeared inviting, and they again put to sea, fully expecting to reach Guernsey

without any farther interruption. But before they could enter the harbour the wind again became adverse; and blowing exceedingly strong, they were obliged to shape their course for Alderney. Having reached the bay, they found themselves encircled with dangerous rocks, which were discovered in every direction by the rippling of the waves. To augment the horrors of their condition, the wind instantly died away, and left them in a turbulent sea, without the means of managing their vessel. Thus circumstanced, they applied to the throne of grace, in earnest prayer, and God was pleased to hearken to their petitions. A favourable breeze came to their deliverance, and, filling their sails, conducted the vessel in safety between the rocks, and about sunset brought them into the port of Alderney. While becalmed among the rocks, that were barely covered with the foaming breakers, their situation was truly awful. The vessel lay at the mercy of the waves and tide; and, so far as they were competent to judge from their situation, if the breeze had been withholden a few minutes longer, the vessel must have been driven upon the rocks, and inevitably wrecked.

At eight the next evening, Mr. Wesley preached on the beach, not far from the place where he lodged, and was favoured with a tolerable congregation. Soon after he had finished, the governor of the island paid him a visit, and manifested a great degree of courtesy. But, as this was not the place of their ultimate destination, they seized the first opportunity and sailed for Guernsey on the 15th.

In this island also they were treated with more than common civility. In the mornings the congregations were large and serious, and in the evenings crowded and deeply attentive. On the 18th, Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke dined with the governor, who endeavoured to show them every mark of politeness and respect.

From Guernsey they proceeded to Jersey, in which island the views of the inhabitants respecting Methodism had undergone a favourable revolution. Mr. Brackenbury, who still resided in this island, received them joyfully; and in his house Mr. Wesley preached to congregations that seemed to be more than usually serious. "Even the gentry," says Mr. Wesley, "heard

with deep attention. What little things does God use to advance his own glory! Probably many of these flock together because I have lived so many years, and perhaps even this may be the means of *their* living for ever." In the country parts of this island, where the French language is spoken, Mr. Wesley preached during his stay. In this journey he was accompanied by Mr. Brackenbury, who, standing by his side, translated into French and delivered to the people the sentences which fell from his lips. But tedious as this method was, they waited with serious patience, and God was pleased to bless the discourse to many souls. On returning to the town, as they found themselves detained by contrary winds, the large assembly room was offered for his accommodation. In this he preached to large and serious congregations, and many appeared to profit by the word delivered.*

From this transient survey, we may perceive the astonishing change which had taken place in the short space of two years. On a former occasion, few places could present a more hostile front to the gospel of Christ than these islands exhibited. These circumstances the biographer of Dr. Adam Clarke will hereafter delineate, and give to posterity in detail. But now, on the present occasion, all was harmony and peace; and the same tongues that had exclaimed, "Crucify him," were now employed, in several instances, in uttering hosannas to the name of God. We may learn from hence the duty of perseverance in the cause of truth, even though our efforts of love should be repelled with frowns. We may infer, also, that the want of a favourable reception is no evidence of the divine disapprobation. In many places where our most flourishing societies are to be found at present, the frowns of persecution at first forbade us to introduce the gospel. And perhaps, if these hostilities had been made the exclusive criterion of action, Methodism, as well as Christianity in the abstract, would have been nearly unknown in the world.

Several places, on the contrary, where the early

* See Life of Mr. Wesley, by Coke and Moore.

smiles of approbation seemed to invite the gospel with flattering promises, soon put on a forbidding aspect, and presented a host of difficulties too formidable to be withstood. Among the islands of the West Indies such places are still to be found. Unhappily, the planter too frequently thinks that the moral improvement of his slaves is inimical to his interest. He therefore conceives it to be his duty to secure that ignorance which a privation of instruction will ensure. Wretched, however, must that system be which derives its chief support from the shadows with which it is enveloped, and whose existence seems to depend upon the exclusion of light. Time and experience have demonstrated the delusiveness of these apprehensions in all places where experiments have been made, and many of the planters now find it to be their interest and their duty to support those principles and doctrines they once endeavoured to suppress, and against which many still continue to exert their power.

Against this host of prejudices Dr. Coke was called to contend in the course of his missionary labours. But through divine grace he was prepared for his work by that activity, zeal, and perseverance, which invariably marked his character. Of this fact the following circumstance furnishes a striking instance:—On his second visit to these islands, he was taken by Mr. Brackenbury into the country to hold a meeting at St. Mary's, in Jersey, that he might have an opportunity of noticing the various characters and objects which presented themselves to view. Unhappily, the tempest of persecution had not yet wholly subsided. At this meeting the ringleader of a daring mob was present, who assailed the doctor in a most brutal and ignominious manner, almost lifting him from the ground by his ears. But bearing these indignities with the most exemplary patience, the more sober part of the congregation were rather edified by the spirit which he manifested, than injured by the disturbance which the rioters had occasioned.

On leaving the Norman Isles he repaired to England, visiting many of the principal towns, and employing his time in preaching the gospel, and recommending the

case of the unfortunate negroes to the benevolent attention of the congregations, and to the compassion of wealthy individuals. Being polite in his manners, and deeply interested in the issue of his undertaking, no circumstance, however forbidding, could prevent his appeal. And, although he was occasionally repelled from the doors of the irreligious and the unfeeling, he was frequently successful in places which most other men would have tried in vain. In thus making provision for the missionaries he spent his time without meeting with any remarkable incident, until the conference of 1788, soon after which he again prepared to revisit the West Indies.

CHAPTER X.

Dr. Coke sails for Barbadoes—Proceedings on his arrival—Establishment of a mission—Repairs to St. Vincent's—Visits the Caribbs—Reflections on savage life—Repairs to Dominica—The work prospers in Antigua and in St. Christopher's—Remarks on a persecuting edict, passed in Eustatius—Driven from this island—Forbidden to establish a mission in Saba—Visits Tortola and Santa Cruz—Pleasing prospects in these islands—Delivered from imminent danger in a boat—Promising appearances of missionary success in Jamaica—Revisits the continent—Difficulties of travelling—Picturesque scenery—Nocturnal fires—Progress of religion in Georgia—Resolution to build Wesley college—Prosperous state of religion in South Carolina—In North Carolina—In Virginia—In Maryland—In Pennsylvania and Delaware—And in New-York—Total increase of the societies—Returns to England—Reflections on the condition of the heathen world.

The conference of 1788 having appointed three missionaries for the West Indies, in addition to those that were already there, placed them under the immediate superintendence of Dr. Coke, who made preparations to accompany them thither. A passage was taken on board of a ship bound for Barbadoes, which was an island that he had not yet visited. Their voyage was pleasant in a high degree, as the weather was favourable, and no memorable accident occurred. In addition to this, the accommodations on board were excellent, and the captain, who was deeply impressed with the

fear of God, did every thing in his power to render their situation comfortable. On any of their devotions he never attempted to lay the least restraint, and scarcely ever omitted to join in them when the duties of his station afforded him leisure.

The men who were on board conducted themselves in a manner not unworthy of their captain. Many seemed to be deeply affected with the sermons which were delivered; and throughout the whole voyage they read with earnestness and apparent delight the books that were presented to them. Nor was this conduct assumed out of a mere artificial complaisance. When the missionaries parted from them, their sincerity was demonstrated by the tears which suffused their faces, and by the earnestness with which they squeezed their hands. "And when our boat dropped astern," says Dr. Coke, "they gave us three as hearty cheers as I believe were ever given by a company of sailors."

The missionaries who accompanied Dr. Coke in this expedition were Messrs. Lamb, Gamble, and Pearce; but neither they nor himself expected to find any individual whom they knew upon the island. On entering Bridgetown, the capital, they repaired to an inn; but finding this abode likely to be expensive, and being assured that the labours of all would not be wanted in this place, they seized an opportunity which immediately offered, and despatched Mr. Lamb and Mr. Gamble to St. Vincent's, on board of a merchant ship that was about to sail for that island the same evening.

Dr. Coke and Mr. Pearce were now left alone, to declare their intentions, and to seize such openings as Providence might present for the introduction of the gospel. Scarcely had their colleagues departed before it occurred to Mr. Pearce that a regiment of soldiers, among whom he knew several pious persons when in Ireland, was at this time stationed in Barbadoes. On communicating this information to Dr. Coke, he was directed to go in search of them, and, if possible, gather from these the dispositions of the inhabitants toward the gospel. Mr. Pearce accordingly departed, and in about two hours returned with a soldier, who still retained his faithfulness to God. The excursion of Mr.

Pearce among the soldiers, soon gave publicity to the mission, and almost immediately brought to the inn a pious sergeant, who belonged to the same regiment. The sergeant gazed for a few moments on Mr. Pearce, and instantly recollecting his features, clasped him in his arms with all the joy which an unexpected meeting of Christian friends in a distant region of the globe is calculated to inspire.

From these soldiers they learned that, after they had continued for some time in silence on the island, the love of Christ constrained them to call sinners to repentance. The singularity of their conduct soon excited the attention of a merchant whose name was Button, who provided for them a large room, which had formerly been a warehouse, and in this they regularly assembled for public worship.

Guided by these rays of light, in this gloomy region, Dr. Coke determined to pay Mr. Button a visit on the ensuing morning, and consult with him on the most eligible means to be adopted for carrying their designs into execution. But these contrivances were soon rendered useless by the benevolence of the gentleman on whom they intended to wait. Mr. Button, having heard of their arrival, sent them an invitation to breakfast with him; thus unexpectedly furnishing them with an opportunity of introducing the object they had in view.

Arriving at Mr. Button's, Dr. Coke was surprised to find himself accosted by his name. Mr. Button, it appears, had frequently heard him preach on the continent of America, during his visits to the United States; and while there several of his servants had been baptized by him, one of whom was now truly alive to God. Being hospitably entertained by this friendly gentleman, whose house and heart seemed alike open to receive them, Dr. Coke and Mr. Pearce, at his request, discharged their bill at the inn, and immediately took up their abode at his friendly habitation. Dr. Coke intending to preach at Mr. Button's house, the novelty of the report drew together a concourse of people nearly three times as large as could be accommodated. Among these many seemed to hear with deep attention, and all behaved with the utmost propriety. But it was not at the house

of Mr. Button alone that divine Providence seemed to favour their designs. When Dr. Coke arrived, he found three ladies on a visit at his habitation. These also attended preaching, and were so far pleased that they invited Mr. Pearce, who was to remain on the island, to their house, and declared their readiness to have their slaves instructed by him. Another circumstance occurred which, though apparently arising from accident, appeared to be overruled by Providence to favour their undertaking. Dr. Coke, prior to his leaving England, had received a letter of recommendation from a gentleman in London, to his friend Henry Trotman, Esq., of Barbadoes. After spending a few days at the house of Mr. Button, Dr. Coke went in search of Mr. Henry Trotman, to whom he was soon directed. It, however, so happened that this was not the gentleman for whom the letter was designed, but another of the same name. Ignorant of this mistake, Dr. Coke introduced himself; and being received with much politeness and friendship, he began to unfold his plan of establishing a mission among the negroes; nor was it till he had disclosed the whole which he had to communicate, that he discovered his error. The mistake was not an unfortunate one, as this gentleman showed his approbation of his intention, and freely offered his house for the accommodation of Mr. Pearce; and his slaves, about two hundred in number, he declared to be at liberty, on all proper occasions, to receive instructions. A few days afterward Dr. Coke found the real Mr. Trotman, and was received by him with an equal degree of respect. He had also about two hundred negroes on his plantation, and to these he was willing Mr. Pearce should have free access.

On waiting on the governor, the same degree of politeness was conspicuous. To the principles of the mission he avowed himself to be friendly; so that no obstacle of consequence appeared to its full establishment. From one of the magistrates, also, they received a friendly visit, and the promise of a cordial co-operation in the execution of their future plans. This latter gentleman was not wholly a stranger to Methodism, nor to the probable influence that it would have on the minds of the people. He had heard Mr. Wesley and

his brother preach several times in England; and therefore he expressed his approbation from a conviction of the utility that might be expected; promising to Mr. Pearce all the assistance and support which it was in his power to render, either to him or to the cause in which he was engaged.

It was thus, through a train of providential circumstances, that a fair opening was made, in a few days, for the introduction of the gospel into an island containing about seventy thousand blacks, and nearly thirty thousand whites. And although, in this island, the mission of which we have thus traced the infancy has not fully answered, in its extent, the sanguine expectations which these dawning appearances were calculated to excite; yet, from that moment to the present, many souls have been born of God, and many have departed this life in the full triumph of faith. The members of society have invariably been few in number; but they may be considered as affording to all an amiable example of a genuine Christian community.

Dr. Coke, having to the utmost of his power provided for the accommodation and success of Mr. Pearce, took his departure from this island, and followed his other friends to St. Vincent's. On meeting together, and being joined by Mr. Baxter, it was agreed among them that they should traverse a mountainous district, and pay a visit to the Caribbs, who at this time resided in a part of this island. Their object in this visit was, to notice their dispositions, and from thence to infer how far it might be practicable to establish schools among them for the instruction of their children; and finally to introduce the gospel in some language that should be mutually understood.

After some time, the attempt was made. But, like many similar efforts among savage tribes, the advantages resulting from the task were not equal to the expectations that flattered their early hopes. Prior to this time, Mr. Baxter and his wife had left the island of Antigua, and taken up their abode in St. Vincent's, not far from the district which the Caribbs inhabited. Here they had been treated with more civility and respect than might have been expected from uncultivated savages.

And from the readiness with which the children received instruction, and the progress that several of them made, they gave convincing proofs of exalted genius and of extensive intellectual powers. But neither instruction nor admonition was sufficient to counteract that attachment to barbarous manners, which surrounding example tended every day to keep alive.

Dr. Coke was so affected at their condition, and so charmed with the dignified simplicity of their demeanour, that he was unwilling to abandon his design. Mr. Baxter and his wife were therefore prevailed upon, through his importunity, to relinquish for a still longer period the advantages and comforts of civilized society, and to continue among these children of nature, that no room might remain for reflections on any future occasion that their efforts failed of success because they were not accompanied with perseverance. But neither effort nor perseverance was available to accomplish the object they had in view. The instinctive propensities of a savage life were not to be subdued; nor would they barter the fond idea of native independence, which had been transmitted to them from their remotest ancestors, for all the learning that the circle of science could impart, or all the wealth that England or even Europe could offer.* From the influence of principles which cannot be fully developed, the greater part of the efforts which have been made to civilize the savage hordes of mankind have been defeated. Their propensities to war

* Of the origin, history, numbers, customs, manners, peculiarities, and prevailing characteristics of these savages, Dr. Coke has published an interesting account in his journal; (pp. 79–91;) and a still more copious account in the chapter respecting St. Vincent's, in his History of the West Indies. To these narratives the reader is therefore referred for particulars; and more immediately to the latter for a minute detail of the horrid barbarities practised by them during the late Caribb war. On the justice of this war different opinions have been entertained. It cannot be doubted that they practised many inhumanities; but it cannot be denied that the primitive inhabitants of an island have at least as plausible a right to the dominion of it as any nation which may acquire the subsequent possession of it, merely because it happens to be more powerful. Those who survived the war were removed from St. Vincent's to the little island of *Baliseau*, where their scattered remnants still remain.

and hunting, which their modes of life are calculated to cherish, communicate a restlessness to their spirits which, in civilized communities, is rarely known. To break them, therefore, "from fierce barbarians into men," though a work of benevolence and humanity, is one of those undertakings that may be contemplated with ease, but cannot be accomplished without difficulties which few only have been able to surmount.

Returning from the country of the Caribbs, Dr. Coke visited many plantations, and preached in several places. In most of these both he and his associate missionaries were received with marked attention and respect, and their preaching met with tokens of approbation. It was therefore determined that Mr. Gamble and Mr. Clarke should continue in the English division of the island, while Mr. Baxter and his wife repaired to the Caribb country, to make among the natives a persevering effort, although it should be rendered finally unsuccessful, as was actually the case.

Having thus made provision for St. Vincent's, Dr. Coke and Mr. Lamb sailed for Dominica, to notice with more distinctness the conduct of the whites, and to ascertain their dispositions toward the moral improvement of their slaves. In this voyage they were accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Baxter, who repaired to Antigua, to settle their affairs, and take their final leave of their friends, before they returned to take up their abode among the savages of St. Vincent's.

Arriving at Dominica, they found a lady waiting to entertain them. She had received an intimation of their intention from a local preacher of St. Christopher's, and had made preparations for their accommodation, and for their preaching. The treatment they experienced in this island was not less inviting than that which had been manifested in others. And on waiting upon the governor, his politeness and urbanity of manners confirmed the favourable opinion which they had been led to entertain. Their stay, however, was no more than five days. But during these their preaching had been rendered so far successful that many souls appeared truly awakened; and before they left the island they formed a little society, consisting of twenty-four mem-

bers; but some of these had previously attended preaching while in other islands, before they were removed to this.

On revisiting Antigua, they discovered that the work of God had so far prospered, that 2,800 members were now in society, and that the spirit of hearing continued, without any diminution, among the multitudes that composed the congregations. And so far had the principles and doctrines inculcated extended their influence over the general practice, that on Christmas-day, and the two days following, being seasons of festivity among the negroes, martial law, which had always been deemed necessary, was now reduced to an empty form.

In the island of St. Christopher's, to which they next repaired, the work was also in a prosperous state. On a former occasion, when Mr. Hammet first came among the inhabitants, vital religion was totally unknown; and even in the form of godliness there was a lamentable deficiency. But through the indefatigable exertions of this missionary, a society of 700 members had been formed, and far the greater part appeared to be devoted to God. In addition to this, and what was of considerable consequence to the work, two local preachers had been raised up among them, and their labours had been rendered exceedingly beneficial. "The second morning after my arrival," says Dr. Coke, "we were visited with a tremendous earthquake. The beds, the room, the whole house in which we were, shook most terribly, for several seconds. The shock was felt in other islands."

From St. Christopher's and Antigua, in which "the wilderness and the solitary place were become glad, and the desert had begun to rejoice and to blossom as the rose," they repaired to St. Eustatius, to witness a scene that was nearly the reverse. Against the missionaries, and all the friends of the gospel, the iron hand of persecution had extended a whip of scorpions, and many had suffered from their deadly stings. Harry, of whom an account has been given in the preceding chapter, having been found guilty of praying, had been publicly flogged, and banished from the island in such a manner as to be rendered invisible and unknown. And a law

had been passed avowedly against religion, which, from its singular enormity, deserves to be held up in every public record for the execration of posterity. Of this edict, which its own infamy will tend to immortalize, the general outlines are as follows :—

"That if any white person should be found *praying* with his brethren, for the first offence he should be fined fifty pieces of eight; for the second offence, one hundred pieces; and for the third offence, he should be whipped, his goods confiscated, and he should then be banished from the island. That if a coloured man should be found *praying*, for the first offence he should receive thirty-nine lashes, and for the second, if free, he should be whipped and banished. But if a slave should be found guilty of *praying*, he should be whipped for every offence." This punishment to be inflicted on the slave was evidently at the discretion of the master, whose passion or humanity might extend or restrict the number of lashes which the executioner was to inflict. Neither was the caprice of his tyrannical dominion circumscribed by law to the mere excoriation of the whip, as was evident in the case of Harry, who had disappeared. The interest of the master, in all countries where slavery is sanctioned by law, is the only protection of the slave against brutal violence. And, in cases where religion becomes criminal, even interest can urge but a feeble plea against the ebullitions of vengeance, which spring from a carnal mind, intoxicated with power, and gathering applause from barbarities which would seem to triumph over private and pecuniary considerations.

On taking a retrospective survey of the savage enormities which in the darker ages of the world distinguished and degraded both pagan and papal Rome, we can find no edict so avowedly abandoned in its principle as this which is now before us. The heathen idolaters palliated their enormities with a pretence that the Christians were attempting to introduce strange gods, that would eventually destroy the authority of those that were established; and the papal idolaters covered the turpitude of their abominations with the sanctimonious pretext that the Protestants were introducing heresies into the church

which it was their duty to suppress. But, on the present occasion, the edict was avowedly passed against religion itself; thus making it a criminal action for human beings to offer prayer to God. Such was the unholy and intolerant spirit which the legislature of St. Eustatius openly displayed against the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the year 1789.

On finding the door thus completely shut against his ministry, Dr. Coke took his leave of this inhospitable region, on the 1st of January, 1790, amid the tears of an affectionate society, which, under these storms of persecution, amounted at this time to two hundred and fifty-eight, many of whom he privately baptized prior to his departure. Scarcely, however, had he embarked, before he discovered that the captain and sailors were too much intoxicated to manage the vessel. In this condition they drove against a large ship, injuring their own boom, and damaging their yards. On getting free from this ship they found themselves driving off into the sea, in such direction as the wind and tide conspired to carry them. Alarmed at the danger of their situation, Dr. Coke and some missionaries who accompanied him, though totally unacquainted with nautical affairs, exerted themselves to bring the head of the vessel toward the harbour from which they had but just departed. Happily their unskilful exertions were crowned with success. And in their return, after running against another ship, breaking their rudder, and damaging their stern, they were compelled to bribe the captain with ten dollars to put them once more on shore in the island of St. Eustatius.

The circumstances connected with this disastrous attempt to leave the island, when viewed in connection with the morals of which the captain and crew had just exhibited a specimen, induced Dr. Coke to think that his being again driven back was a loud call from Providence for him to bear a public testimony for God. To prevent, however, any of his friends from incurring the penalties of the law, and partially presuming that, as a British subject, he might escape the rigour of its denunciations, he hired a large room for a month, and preached the next day to a quiet and sober congregation,

composed of individuals that seemed athirst for the water of life. Being thus permitted to finish his discourse without any interruption, he flattered himself that he might proceed in peace, and accordingly published his intention to preach again on the ensuing Sunday. But it was not long before he was convinced that he had deluded himself with fallacious hopes.

It was at a late hour, when the governor, having heard of Dr. Coke's crime, sent for the gentleman at whose house he lodged, and threatened him with the vengeance of the law in case he sheltered under his roof such a flagrant transgressor. The next morning brought a message to Dr. Coke from the governor and the judge, directing him to promise that, during his continuance on the island, neither he nor his associates would either publicly or privately, by day or by night, preach either to whites or blacks. The messenger was farthermore directed to inform him that, in case of a refusal to comply with this mandate, he would expose himself to a prosecution, to arbitrary punishment, and a banishment from the island.

On receiving this mandate, Dr. Coke and his friends withdrew to consider what answer they should return. In this deliberation they were fully satisfied that their continuance on the island could not be permanent; and that, by persevering in opposition to the government, they should awaken its vengeance, without being able to derive any real advantage from their suffering—that, in other islands which were under the British dominions, with whose laws they were better acquainted, there were more openings than they had missionaries to supply—that the call upon their exertions there was not less imperious—that in this island the class meetings had been permitted to continue without any molestation, and that God had rendered these private means a blessing to many souls. Moreover, that in case of their compliance with the demand that was made, it was highly probable these class meetings would escape the notice of government; but no doubt could be entertained that they would be instantly suppressed as soon as the arm of persecution was lifted up. From these considerations, and especially as they were under the

dominion of a foreign power, and at the mercy of a colonial tyrant, from whose arbitrary conduct they could make no appeal, they resolved to abandon the island, and therefore returned an answer, that the mandates of government should be obeyed.

It is a remarkable feature in the history of the human character, that we are not fully competent to appreciate the value of any blessing until we suffer a partial privation of it. The importance of time is not sufficiently known until its days and weeks have departed; and the value of health is not adequately discovered till sickness reminds us of its neglected excellence. On the same principle, the benefits which we derive from British laws, and from the British constitution, appear with new lustre and advantage when contrasted with the mandates of tyrants, and the consequences of despotism in foreign parts. It may seem paradoxical that the existence of natural evil should become necessary to make us sensible of the great blessing of natural good; but in a thousand instances the fact is indisputable; and it furnishes us with an awful proof of the intellectual and moral degeneracy of man. It was from the lessons of tyranny taught in the island of St. Eustatius, that Dr. Coke learned to behold, with additional motives of gratitude to God, the superior advantages which were enjoyed in his native land.

On departing from this island of intolerance, Dr. Coke and his associates returned to St. Christopher's, and from thence proceeded to Nevis, in both of which places their prospects of success were highly flattering. From Nevis they repaired to Saba, an island belonging also to Holland; but being under a distinct governor, whose disposition might be justly contrasted with that of the governor of St. Eustatius, they flattered themselves with a more favourable reception. On their arrival they were received with the utmost degree of politeness and cordiality by him and his family; and the inhabitants in general, among whom no minister had been established for *seventeen years*, expressed their grateful joy at the prospect of hearing once more the sound of the gospel. To have one of the missionaries stationed among them, both the governor and council joined in an earnest re-

quest to Dr. Coke, promising to provide for his support, and to appropriate the long forsaken church to his accommodation. The people concurred in the same entreaty; and Dr. Coke complied with their solicitation, leaving behind him Mr. Brazier, who had been raised up in the West Indies under the preaching of Mr. Hammet. But it was not long that these pleasing indications were permitted to continue. The governor of St. Eustatius, being governor general of the Dutch islands, no sooner learned that a missionary was about to be stationed in Saba, than he issued orders for his expulsion from the island. With this mandate the governor of Saba was compelled to comply; and Mr. Brazier was dismissed, though with evident marks of reluctance.

On finding it morally impossible, through the persecuting spirit of the governor general, to establish a mission in the Dutch islands, although the fields were white unto harvest, Dr. Coke sailed from Saba, and landed on the shores of Tortola, on the 17th of January, 1790. The inhabitants of this island, amounting to about 1,000 whites and 8,000 blacks, appeared ripe for the gospel; and the general wish of the negroes was, that they might, if possible, have a Methodist missionary. From the people at large he met with a cordial reception; and their behaviour, during his preaching among them to increasing congregations, indicated their conviction that they had an interest in eternity.

From Tortola, after preaching twice, Dr. Coke proceeded to Santa Cruz, an island containing about 30,000 inhabitants, which belonged to the crown of Denmark. In this island he was received by the governor general with a degree of politeness and civility which might also be placed in contrast with the ferocious brutality exhibited in St. Eustatius. From his offers of protection and encouragement, he taught Dr. Coke and his associates to believe that there was nothing in his power which they might not reasonably expect, that would tend to promote their designs. A Quaker lady also opened her house for preaching, and the congregations that assembled inclined them to think that they were not likely to labour among them in vain.

The inviting prospects which thus appeared, both in

Santa Cruz and Tortola, induced Dr. Coke to determine that the only missionary who now remained unemployed, should tarry behind, and divide his labours between these two islands, although he had been reserved for Jamaica, which had not yet been visited. In the meanwhile it was his intention to proceed to Jamaica, and survey the moral condition of the slaves, that, on his return to England, he might lay the case of all the visited islands before Mr. Wesley and the conference, and procure such farther assistance as might be deemed necessary, by sending so many additional missionaries as the benevolence of the public might enable them to support.

Thus the gospel, through a train of providential circumstances, diminutive in their beginning, and motley in their aspect, was introduced into this vast archipelago by the indefatigable instrumentality of Dr. Coke. In ten of the islands, which unitedly contained about two hundred and sixty thousand souls, near four-fifths of whom were in heathenish darkness, the prospects of success were truly flattering. And although in several the hand of persecution has since been occasionally lifted up, and our missionaries have sometimes suffered severely from lawless mobs and oppressive edicts, the word of God has run and been glorified; the little one has become a thousand; multitudes of living witnesses still bear testimony for God; and many, made wise unto salvation, have entered into the joy of their Lord.

Returning from Santa Cruz to Tortola, Dr. Coke made preparations to repair to Jamaica, the last island he intended visiting before he proceeded to the continent. The ship in which he had taken a passage being ready for sea, he was directed to repair on board at a late hour in the evening, as the captain expected to sail early the next morning. The vessel at this time lay at anchor about a mile from the quay, from which place Dr. Coke took a boat in order to get on board. This was an undertaking that nearly cost him his life. Proceeding on their passage in pleasant weather, a gentleman who sat behind him observed, with some degree of astonishment, that the water, from the mere motion of

the boat in rowing, came rapidly in over the stem. The discovery created serious apprehensions; and Dr. Coke, on putting his hand over the side, found that its upper edge was not more than an inch above the surface of the sea. They were at this time about half way between the quay and the vessel on board of which they expected to sail. On inquiring into the cause, it appeared that the bottom of the boat, which was deep and leaky, had admitted so much water below, as to sink the gunwale to that alarming state. Thus situated, it is probable that in a few minutes longer, if the discovery had not been made, the boat would have sunk to the bottom, and every soul on board would have been hurried into eternity. But, through divine Providence, their danger appeared just in time to prevent its consequences, so that, by using every exertion, the water was baled out, and they reached the vessel in safety.

Dr. Coke landed at Port Royal, in Jamaica, on the 19th of January, and repaired to the house of a friend, to whom he carried a letter of recommendation. His reception was favourable, and his preaching was, after some time, attended by large congregations. From some intoxicated white men he met with a little interruption while preaching at Kingston; but as soon as these genteel disturbers found that the congregation determined not to join them, and that they were opposed by some spirited supporters of the gospel, they desisted from their riotous proceedings, and permitted both preacher and people to conclude in peace. On the state of religion in this island at this time, Dr. Coke, after having cast an eye over such parts as fell more immediately under his observation, makes the following remarks:—

"I am fully satisfied that great good might be done in this island, if the gospel were regularly preached here with power. A small society of awakened persons might, even at present, be formed, both among the whites and blacks in Kingston.

"Indeed this valuable and populous island demands and deserves much of our attention and exertions, as it probably contains above 300,000 inhabitants; the slaves alone, in the year 1768, amounted to 217,000; and in

Kingston only they have been nearly doubled since that time.*

"This I must add, in honour of the island, that I never visited any place, either in Europe or America, in which the gospel was not preached, where I received so many civilities as I did in Jamaica, four or five families of property having opened to me their houses, and very evidently their hearts also, and assured me that any missionaries we shall in future send to that island shall be welcome to beds, and every thing their houses afford."†

Such were the flattering prospects which, in this approaching dawn of our mission in Jamaica, were held out by the inhabitants. At this period Dr. Coke had no missionary whom he could leave behind him. But the favourable impression which the kindness of the inhabitants made, plead so strongly in their favour, that, on his return, it was his earliest care to provide for those openings in this populous island which divine Providence seemed evidently to have effected. But flattering prospects are not always a sure criterion of future success. The persecutions which, since this period, have arisen in Jamaica, furnish a much more indubitable evidence that human nature is alienated from God, and that the carnal mind is enmity against him. The slaves, indeed, bending beneath the weight of their burdens, have invariably manifested an inclination to receive the gospel; and many thousands have, at different times, in this island, embraced its consolatory doctrines. But the same power that has fettered their bodies has been exerted to rivet the fetters of ignorance on their minds. Every effort that ingenuity could devise, or influence accomplish, has been made to prevent them from receiving instruction. These unholy exertions have, indeed, more than once, been counteracted by the legislature at home; but the distance between this island and the mother country has prevented the latter from hindering altogether the early operation of the colonial laws. Yet in the midst of persecution God has been pleased to carry on his work, and to bless the labours

* Bryan Edwards states the population of Jamaica, in the year 1791, at 30,000 whites, and 250,000 blacks.

† Dr. Coke's journal, p. 103.

of his servants. In procuring the repeal of several persecuting edicts, the active services of Dr. Coke ought never to be forgotten. In this department his praise is in all the churches, and his name cannot be lost in silence until gratitude shall cease to be a Christian virtue.

This indefatigable man, having thus passed through the islands, established missionaries in several, and prepared the way for others in nearly all, took his departure from the archipelago, and once more sailed for the continent. He reached Charleston on the 24th of February, at which place he expected to meet Mr. Asbury, who was to come thither for that purpose by previous appointment. But, as their voyage had exceeded the time of their respective calculations, Mr. Asbury had left the place a few days prior to his arrival, and proceeded on his way toward Georgia, that he might be present at the approaching conference. Dr. Coke instantly followed, and by making extraordinary exertions, overtook him on the road, and became his companion through the remaining part of the journey.

In traversing the wilds, before they could reach the place of their destination, they found themselves exposed to difficulties and dangers which can only be known in England by report. Sometimes they were compelled, after travelling through the day, exposed to all the rigours of the season, to take up their abode in houses formed of logs, which admitted through their crevices the piercing spirit of the northern breeze; and, after obtaining a slender repast, to find repose on the unyielding floor. Sometimes they missed their way through the trackless forests; and occasionally travelled sixteen or eighteen miles without seeing any human being but themselves, fording in their progress many deep, rapid, and dangerous rivers. Sometimes, although they carried provisions with them, they could not find it convenient to take any refreshment from an early hour in the morning until night had gathered her sable mantle around them. And even when an opportunity offered, the stump of a tree served them for a table; especially if it lifted its solitary head near some spring of water, or some meandering stream.

But, to counterbalance these inconveniences, and to relieve the solitude of their journeys, they were occasionally intercepted by large congregations, that assembled at stated places to wait their arrival. To these they preached the word of life, and much success seemed to crown their labours. The scenery, also, with which they were surrounded, sometimes appeared romantic and highly picturesque. Extensive vistas, expanded waters, towering pines, the rustling of breezes, the flight of birds, and the starting of trembling fawns, all conspired to impart an exhilarating solemnity to their spirits, and to raise their thoughts from nature "up to nature's God."

On one particular occasion they found themselves illuminated at a late hour by the blaze of pine trees that had been accidentally set on fire. At certain seasons of the year, the planters find it necessary to burn the decayed grass, the dried leaves, and the little shrubs, that the surface of the ground may be prepared for approaching vegetation. The fire, thus communicated, spreads with inconceivable rapidity, so that several acres are almost instantly covered with a sheet of flame. In passing by the trunks of the pine trees, the fire occasionally seizes on the oozing turpentine that exudes from their sides. Pursuing this combustible matter, the flame mounts to their summits, and spreads along their branches, and frequently lodges in their rotten limbs, so that sometimes the forest is in a blaze. By the light of one of these fires Dr. Coke and his companion travelled, while pursuing their journey through the forests, from Charleston to Georgia. "It was," says he, "the most astonishing illumination that I ever beheld. We seemed surrounded with extensive fires, and I question whether the king of France's stag hunt in his forest by night, which he has sometimes given to his nobility, would be more wonderful or entertaining to a philosophic eye. I have seen old rotten pine trees all on fire; the trunks and the branches, which looked like so many arms, were full of visible fire, and made a most grotesque appearance."

Arriving at Georgia, through such vicissitudes as have been mentioned, they began their conference on the 9th

of March, and passed through the business of the season with order and unanimity. At this conference it was found that the work of God had prospered considerably during the preceding year,—that 784 members had been added to the society,—and that peace and prosperity were found in all their borders. It was also resolved, in order to promote the welfare of the rising generation, that another college (though less splendid and expensive than Cokesbury had been) should be erected, and erected in this state: and that it should bear the name of Wesley college, as a memorial of Mr. Wesley's affection for this province, from the time that he resided among its inhabitants in the earlier period of his life. To defray the expenses of this building, the members who were present entered into an immediate subscription; and, agreeably to the custom of patriarchal simplicity, contributed their portions in the produce of their lands. In one congregation alone 12,500 pounds of tobacco were subscribed; the value of which, according to the market price of that commodity, amounted, free of all expense, to one hundred pounds sterling. To support this college when erected, the principal friends of Methodism in this state engaged to purchase 2,000 acres of land, and to appropriate its produce to the benefit of the institution, under the direction of a committee, and agreeably to certain rules, bearing, on the whole, a near resemblance to those of Cokesbury college, which have been given in detail in a former chapter.

From this conference in Georgia they returned to Charleston, where another was held for South Carolina. In this state, also, they found that the work of God was in a prosperous condition, 907 having been added to the society during the preceding year. From mobs and planters they now met with no riotous molestation; but their enemies had adopted a new method to express their hostility. The public newspapers teemed with invectives of the most virulent nature, and Dr. Coke and his colleagues were represented as men who were attempting to subvert the established order of things. But a soft answer turneth away wrath. The irritation of the writers was not inflamed with the replies which were

given; so that the tempest, having spent its violence in an idle blast, was succeeded by a general calm, and peace was once more universally established.

At the conference held in North Carolina the same degree of tranquillity prevailed. In this state 741 had been added to the society; and the most pleasing accounts were produced from Kentucky, of the prosperity of the work in that province. For the education of their children, the inhabitants presented a request that a college might be erected in this remote western settlement. But, as this was an undertaking of too much moment to justify a precipitate engagement, the decision was suspended until the measure should be examined with due deliberation.

From this place they proceeded to Virginia, in which state upward of 2,000 members had been added to the society during the preceding year. Many preachers also were permitted to enter on the increasing work: and the storms of persecution, which had formerly raged with so much violence, were heard no more. Applause and approbation had, on the contrary, succeeded to the frowns of hostility; and chariots and other carriages brought a crowd of genteel and attentive hearers to those spots which ferocious mobs had covered about two years prior to this time. Such were the changes that God had wrought in behalf of his cause in this short period.

In the state of Maryland two conferences were held, in which nothing but unanimity and brotherly love prevailed. The numbers added to the connection in this state amounted to 1,107. Among the congregations that attended both these conferences, the work of God seemed evidently to revive. Many were cut to the heart, and cried aloud for mercy. Many were set at liberty, and constrained to shout aloud for joy. And many, who were induced to come as spectators of the scene, from motives of mere curiosity, avowed their conviction that it was the Lord's doing, though marvellous in their eyes.

For the states of Pennsylvania and Delaware a conference was held at Philadelphia, with accustomed unanimity. But on estimating the number of members in society it was found that a decrease of 56 had taken

place. At Trenton, in the state of New-Jersey, the decrease was still greater, the whole number amounting to 295. For this no adequate reason could be assigned. The preachers had not been unfaithful to their trust, and the congregations had not grown weary in attending. The fact, however, was not to be controverted, although the cause was enveloped in darkness. In this district they had three Indians in society, whose amiable deportment excited a hope that they were the first fruits of a glorious harvest among the savage nations of the continent.

At the last of their annual conferences, which was held at New-York, for that state, it was found that an increase of 900 had taken place. In the city itself a great revival had been witnessed; and, through the zeal and perseverance that were exercised, the work had not only found advocates in the New-England states, but had stretched even to Montreal, and made its appearance on the borders of the lakes. Throughout this state peace and unanimity also prevailed. The preachers who attended the conference appeared to be actuated by the same common spirit; and all separated with renewed resolutions to devote themselves more fully to the service of God.

On combining the various accounts together, it now appeared that the aggregate number of those in society throughout the United States amounted to 43,265. Of these, 35,021 were whites, 8,241 were blacks, and three were Indians. The total increase during the preceding year, notwithstanding the partial losses which some societies had sustained, amounted to 6,111. In this abundant manner had God been pleased to bless the preaching of his holy word, and to accompany it with the gracious outpouring of his Spirit. This to his ministers was an ample recompense for all their toils.

Dr. Coke had now been on the continent from the 24th of February to the 5th of June, 1789; during which time he had attended all the conferences that have been mentioned; had assisted in the transaction of the various branches of business in each; and had travelled through nearly all the states, preaching whereever an opportunity presented itself. Having, through

these journeys on the continent, and from the report of the preachers who attended the various conferences, procured satisfactory intelligence respecting the prevalence of religion in the United States, he now prepared to take his leave, that on his return to England he might again communicate to Mr. Wesley and the British conference the information he had obtained. The West India islands still more particularly had a claim on his attention and fostering care. Methodism on the continent had acquired a degree of maturity which precluded the necessity of parental aid. But in the islands religion was in its infancy; and as it was chiefly embraced by slaves, whose condition in life prevented them from rendering it much pecuniary support, it could only look to the benevolence of the parent country for the regular means of its propagation. Dr. Coke, who was best acquainted with the circumstances, moral condition, and ignorance of the negroes, and also with their attachment to vital Christianity, so far as it had been placed before them, was now almost their only advocate. In this glorious work he had solemnly engaged; and he was about to revisit England, to plead their cause before the congregations of his enlightened and benevolent countrymen.

Prior to his departure from the continent it was determined that, since the Almighty had blessed their exertions in such a supereminent degree, and since three Indians had already embraced the religion of Jesus, a more direct effort should be made to carry the sound of the gospel into their own territories. To promote this design some favourable circumstances happily concurred. Not far from Fort Pitt a tribe of Indians resided, who at this time were at peace with the United States. The chief of this tribe had expressed an earnest wish for some Christian missionaries to be established among them, in order that his people might be instructed in the principles and duties of their religious profession. It was therefore resolved that Mr. Asbury should repair to Fort Pitt, erect a place for public worship, and, if possible, establish a school; and that from hence he should make short excursions into their cantons, and impart to them such instruction as circumstances might

direct. These designs were executed, but the event did not afford any animating presages of success.

Having made these arrangements, Dr. Coke, on the 5th of June, took his leave of Mr. Asbury, and the preachers of the New-York district, who had assembled at the conference; and embarked in a ship bound for Liverpool. His voyage was pleasant, and his companions agreeable. Both the captain and the sailors readily joined in family worship every morning and evening, and regularly attended divine service every Lord's day. They landed at Liverpool on the 10th of July, 1789.

Nothing at this time so much engrossed the attention of Dr. Coke as the interests of the heathen tribes. His benevolence toward these fragments of human nature, seems to have expanded in proportion to the voyages and journeys which he took, and the opportunities he had of surveying their forlorn condition. During his passage from New-York to Liverpool some portion of his time was employed in examining the reports of Mr. Foster, who sailed with Captain Cook in his second voyage around the world. His eye was fixed on the awful condition of the unhappy South Sea islanders, and his thoughts were directed to the practicability of sending missionaries among them. On the calamities which they had suffered from being discovered by Europeans, his journals record sentiments of feeling reprehension. But it was not in his power to do any thing more for them than to drop the tear of sympathy on their condition, and to present them, in the arms of faith and prayer, at the throne of divine grace, in his daily addresses for mercy in behalf of the heathen world.

To a feeling mind, scarcely any thing can be more painful than this melancholy reflection, that in all our early intercourse with the uncivilized nations of the earth the discovery has been made to their disadvantage. When the Romans invaded Britain they introduced among our barbarous ancestors the various arts of civilized life, so that ultimately the benefits resulting from their dominion more than counterbalanced the inconveniences of their conquests. But, unhappily, the Christian nations of Europe have carried disease and a de-

pravity of morals among the little communities they have visited, without introducing any real benefits which may be deemed a compensation for the injuries they have sustained. Recently, indeed, a more liberal spirit has made its appearance in this nation, and the Bible and missionary societies that have been established promise to confer lasting benefits on the communities we have so long neglected, or remembered only to plunder and deprave. May these exertions never terminate until righteousness shall cover the earth!

CHAPTER XI.

Dr. Coke solicits assistance for the establishment of missions among the negroes—Reflections on the nature of his employment—Sails again for the West Indies—Persecution in Barbadoes—Visits Grenada, and establishes a mission there—Disturbance in Antigua—Finds the door still shut in St. Eustatius—Religion flourishes in Nevis—Montego Bay, in Jamaica, affords no very flattering prospect—Negligence of the clergy—Persecution in Kingston—Effects of violence—Chapel injured in St. Vincent's—Anecdote of an African prince and his sister—Sails for the continent—Dangers of the voyage—Visits the Catawba Indians—Description of their dress and habitations—Happy effects of distributing tracts—General increase of religion—Receives tidings of Mr. Wesley's death—Returns to England.

Dr. Coke, on his return to England, early in July, hastened to the conference, to give to Mr. Wesley, and the preachers who were present, a statement of the various events which had fallen under his notice during his absence, relative to the success of the gospel, both in the West Indies and America. The case of the unhappy negroes, in particular, he plead with such affecting eloquence, that all present became deeply interested in their spiritual welfare. The necessity of sending missionaries among them, to fill up the openings of divine Providence, was fully admitted; but how to provide for their support, was a question easy to propose, but difficult to answer. The rapid progress which Methodism was at this time making, both in England and Ireland, appeared to outrun its pecuniary resources,

without allowing any room for a rival charity to divide the public benevolence. But the case of the negroes in the West Indies was irresistible.

It was well known that Dr. Coke, who had so humanely and so earnestly advocated their cause, was ready and willing to travel through the kingdom, and solicit charity from door to door in their behalf. To this work it was the wish of conference that he should devote himself; and endeavour, by the blessing of God, to awaken in the bosom of his countrymen a sympathetic feeling for the negroes, the clanking of whose chains he had heard, and whose state of moral wretchedness he had painfully witnessed.

At the conclusion of the conference, Dr. Coke entered on his laborious work of honourable servility, for which the preachers, departing to their respective circuits before his arrival, in some measure prepared the way. Nearly sixteen months were devoted by him to this employment, during which time he travelled through a considerable part of the kingdom, preaching in the towns which he visited, and soliciting assistance for the support of the gospel among the slaves, whose situation and condition he was admirably adapted to represent in an interesting manner.

In this tour his success was more than equal to his expectation, in the collections of money which he made. But, what was of still greater importance, his artless tale, which always consisted in a simple statement of naked facts without any embellishments, awakened in many bosoms a degree of solicitude in behalf of the swarthy sufferers which continues alive to the present day.

Sixteen months spent in a regular routine of preaching and of begging for the missions, cannot be expected to furnish much variety to diversify the history of his life. Sometimes, indeed, when, having detailed the occasion of his visit, he has been unable to procure any assistance, and has received an insult where he expected to meet benevolence, he has retired with wounded feelings and an agitated spirit. But no rebuff, no insult, no indignant repulse could ever make him abandon the cause of humanity, of justice, and of charity, which he

had openly espoused. We cannot, therefore, but infer that the interests of the heathen world must have rested on his mind with peculiar weight when we find him persevering, even to the moment of his death, amid those clouds and tempests which marked his journey through life.

If Dr. Coke had been encircled with the shield of insensibility, or had made any pretensions to that apathy of which the disciples of Zeno made their boast, we might easily account for his perseverance in a work to which many, who have accused him of vanity, were too proud to stoop. But nothing could be more remote from his natural disposition. Alive to every feeling of the heart, and to all the refined sensibilities of human nature, no one could be more susceptible of the degradation of his employment, in all worldly estimation, or feel with more lively acuteness the wounds inflicted by an insult, than himself. His heart, therefore, must have been deeply engaged in his arduous undertaking, and it is among his highest honours that, without the idle philosophy of the stoic, or the insensibility which stupidity begets, he was enabled, unremittingly, to persevere. Such instances are among the most noble triumphs of Christianity.

Dr. Coke having procured, by his appeals to the benevolent, sufficient pecuniary assistance to defray the debts which had been contracted, and to give to the missionary department of the work a farther extension, began once more to set his face toward the West Indies, to carry to those who were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death the light of the gospel to guide their feet into the way of peace. All necessary preparations being made, he sailed from Falmouth on the 16th of October, 1790, in company with Mr. Lyons and Mr. Werril, two missionaries who were to be stationed in such of the islands as should appear, on their arrival, to have the greatest claim upon their services.

During this voyage they were treated with the utmost politeness and respect; the ship was amply provided with every thing necessary to make their situation comfortable; the company was agreeable; the sailors attended evening prayer; and on Sundays public prayers

were read on the deck, and one of the missionaries preached. They reached Barbadoes on the 22d of November, after a pleasant passage of five weeks and two days.

Dr. Coke had not been long on shore before he was informed that, during his absence, Mr. Pearce, the missionary whom he had stationed in this island, had been exposed to a severe persecution, from an unprincipled rabble, whom the magistrates indirectly encouraged by refusing to set their faces against their conduct. A friend to religion, at length, arose among them, and by opposing the disturbers, soon procured peace. The constant interruptions which they had experienced, had nevertheless injured the society and the congregation. But as a house had been erected sufficient to contain about seven hundred persons, and tranquillity had been restored, the dawn of returning prosperity was again visible. The Methodists in this island had obtained the singular appellation of *Hallelujah.* "Even the little negroes in the streets call them Hallelujah as they pass along."

After preaching in Bridgetown, the capital of this island, to increasing and peaceable congregations, Dr. Coke, in company with Mr. Werril, sailed for St. Vincent's, leaving Mr. Lyons behind, with orders to meet him at St. Christopher's. In St. Vincent's he found that the word preached during his absence had been attended with much success, particularly among the negroes. But he had at the same time the infelicity to find that every effort which had been made to introduce the gospel and European learning among the Caribbs, had proved abortive.

From St. Vincent's Dr. Coke proceeded to Grenada, in which island he was introduced to the Rev. Mr. Dent, a pious clergyman, who rendered him some essential service in establishing the missions, and continued his friendship with unabating fervour through life. In this island a society of about twenty, who seemed earnestly seeking the salvation of their souls, had been formed by the instrumentality of a free mulatto, who had removed thither from Antigua, where he had been a steady member of our society. This circumstance, in conjunction

with the friendship of Mr. Dent, and the favourable concurrence of the principal men in the island, fully prepared the way for the introduction of a mission, which, through the favour of divine Providence, still continues to flourish.

Having thus finished his visit at Grenada, Dr. Coke next proceeded to Antigua, in which the citadel of Methodism seems to have been erected. In this place prosperity had attended the divine word, without any other interruptions than those which the establishment of the gospel in an unenlightened region has always been destined to sustain. One instance of local molestation occurred while Dr. Coke was present. It originated with three gentlemen, who, in a drunken frolic, seized Mr. Baxter as he was coming out of the chapel; and, without ceremony, threatened to murder him. His wife, hearing such daring language, became terrified in a high degree; the negroes were alarmed; and a report prevailed among them that they had actually done the fatal deed. The inhabitants at large, on hearing the uproar, hastened to the spot; and, conceiving that some house on fire had occasioned the tumult, they felt strongly interested in the issue, so that nearly the whole town was in confusion. The interposition of the magistrates soon restored tranquillity, and the readiness of their offers to punish the delinquents operated to deter them from a repetition of their threats and actions.

On leaving Antigua, Dr. Coke, after touching at Montserrat and St. Christopher's, next repaired to the island of St. Eustatius, to visit an affectionate people, to whom, on his preceding visit, he was forbidden to preach. But as a new governor had been appointed, he flattered himself with finding a gentleman of more lenient principles, and more amiable manners. Full of these expectations, he waited on him, but was received with all that ferocious rudeness which we may suppose the former governor would bequeath to his successor. He had caught the mantle, but it was not the mantle of Elijah.

On finding that liberty to preach was not to be expected, and that the society, which consisted of above two hundred, were permitted to associate together without molestation; and in addition to this, that the Lord

had raised up eight exhorters, who had been rendered exceedingly useful among the negroes, he concluded that it would be more prudent to retire privately than to encounter hostilities under which he must inevitably fall. He therefore gave to the leaders and exhorters such advice as he deemed necessary for their future conduct under existing circumstances; and, after commending them by prayer to God, who alone could keep them from falling, took his leave, with a full determination to proceed to Holland, on his return to Europe, to lay before the Dutch government the condition of the inhabitants both here and in Saba, and to implore the protection of the state against the tyranny of the governor. In this island the principal care of the whole work devolved on a person named Ryley, who about four years before had been awakened by the instrumentality of poor black Harry, of whom we have already given some account, but whose fate was still involved in impenetrable secrecy.

In the island of Nevis, to which Dr. Coke next repaired, he met a favourable reception, and found that the mission already established there had been productive of much good. In St. Christopher's where their conference was held, he was highly pleased with the statement given of the progress of the work; and as its extension was his grand object, the general report urged him to proceed to the large and populous island of Jamaica, with all possible expedition.

Being unable to procure a passage thither from this island, Dr. Coke returned once more to St. Vincent's; and, after spending a few days in this place, embarked on board of a vessel bound to Montego Bay, the third town in magnitude on the island of Jamaica. He landed in company with Mr. Werril, on the 5th of January, 1791, without having any letters of recommendation to any person in this part of the island, except to one who lived in the country, and from him they could procure no farther assistance than that which an elegant dinner afforded. On making his case known to the company with whom he dined at an ordinary in the town, on another day, and intimating his wish to preach, if a convenient place could be procured, it was observed by a

person present, that the large assembly room would be very commodious, in case it could be obtained.

This accommodating place appears occasionally to have assumed a variety of aspects. It was now an assembly room; it was frequently used as a play house; it had formerly been a church, and was about to accommodate Dr. Coke, as a plain Methodist preacher. On waiting on the propriĕtor, he granted it with the greatest readiness, and not only refused to receive any remuneration for its use, but voluntarily lighted it at his own expense. The people flocked to hear in great numbers, and behaved with as much decorum as could be expected from persons who had been more accustomed to Shakspeare than to St. Paul. They, however, seemed pleased with what they heard, and testified their approbation by clapping their hands, and crying out, "Encore! Encore!" It is nevertheless but fair to say that this was the conduct only of a few, the proud independence of whose spirit was too exalted to show reverence even in the worship of God. But the interference of some gentlemen soon imposed silence on the "*encore*," and all was attention and peace.

In this town an elegant church had lately been built, at the expense of nearly twelve thousand pounds sterling. But such was the mutual indifference both of priest and people, that on a Sunday morning, when Dr. Coke attended, not more than six persons were present. This, he was informed, was occasioned by a little rain which fell just at the time of assembling. Of this deficiency the minister readily availed himself by instantly quitting the church, and thus escaping a congregation, which, within ten minutes after his departure, would probably have amounted to twenty. On the preceding Sunday there had been no service in this place. And in several parishes throughout the island there were no churches; nor was any divine service performed except what appeared at weddings, and baptisms in private houses, and at the burial of the dead. In these parishes the livings are very lucrative; but, from the disregard paid to public worship, we have no inducement to raise the standard of morals to any exalted pitch.

From Montego Bay, Dr. Coke and Mr. Werril pro-

ceeded over land to Kingston, a distance of 126 miles, through a country abounding with the most romantic scenery, and presenting in all their rich varieties the beautiful productions of the torrid zone. After scaling mountains, passing through defiles, and escaping many dangers, they reached Spanishtown, which is about thirteen miles from Kingston, and rested for a short season from the toils of their journey, and the effects of an almost perpendicular sun. In this place Dr. Coke attempted to preach, but was unable to procure a convenient place until he had prepared to depart, when a tavern-keeper offered a large room; but this he was obliged to decline, in order to pursue his plan.

Long before Dr. Coke's present voyage, Mr. Hammet, who had been appointed for Jamaica, had taken up his residence at Kingston; and had regularly preached in this place, where a convenient chapel had been erected, and large congregations had been induced to attend. But persecution had appeared, and triumphed in an extraordinary degree, so that, on Dr. Coke's arrival, he found Mr. Hammet reduced to a most deplorable condition, through excessive fatigue and violent opposition. On several occasions his life had been exposed to the most imminent danger; and over the chapel he had been compelled to mount guard, to prevent it from being levelled to the ground. Against him, and against the Methodists, the newspapers teemed with the most bitter invectives; and almost every calumny that malice could invent, or ignorance believe, was propagated to irritate the public mind, and make them appear as objects of detestation. Dr. Coke shared in the common defamation. It was gravely asserted that he had been tried in England for horse-stealing, and had fled to America to escape the punishment of the law!

To apply for justice in this place was a useless task. Some of the rioters were prosecuted; but the juries acquitted them, against the most unquestionable evidence. And to mark the spirit which existed, which was encouraged, and which prevailed, the grand jury gave it as their public opinion, that both preacher and chapel ought in justice to be prosecuted as public

nuisances. On one occasion, about eleven at night, the sanctioned mob arose, assailed the chapel, and actually broke down the gates leading to the yard, in opposition to every effort that could be made to deter them. And it was only through the interference of four magistrates, who were urged to their duty by the strong remonstrances of a private gentleman, that they were restrained from proceeding to farther acts of violence.

The continuance of these outrages had rendered preaching in the evenings totally impracticable; and on week days this was the only season when the negroes could attend. In thus preventing them from hearing, they had therefore nearly accomplished their purpose, especially as, through the illness which persecution and fatigue had brought on Mr. Hammet, all preaching had been totally suspended for more than a month. In the reports which were circulated the mob insinuated that the preacher had been killed, and privately buried by his friends; and even at the last, when they could no longer keep the falsehood alive, they consoled themselves with anticipating his death, which they expected their brutality would speedily occasion.

While Dr. Coke remained in Kingston he was joined by another missionary, named Brazier. He had come to this place to assist in the work; but, through the indisposition of Mr. Hammet, whom Dr. Coke was advised by a physician to take with him to the continent for the recovery of his health, the whole was destined to devolve on him and Mr. Werril. Both Dr. Coke and Mr. Werril preached in Kingston, while the former remained on the island; but, although they experienced some interruptions, the outrages were not so violent as to compel them to desist. From Kingston Dr. Coke returned to Spanishtown, and preached several times to congregations which seemed to partake of the same spirit, and who thought it fashionable to deride, lest they might be deemed serious. But their character was too strikingly displayed to afford any room for such a mistake.

During Dr. Coke's stay, although he revived preaching by candlelight, which had been abandoned for some considerable time, the edge of prejudice appeared to be

much blunted. It had gradually softened down from brutal violence and savage uproar to sarcasms, puns, dull witticisms, and hectics of contempt. Against hostilities like these they found no difficulty in maintaining their ground. Hence the work advanced under these inauspicious omens, and at a lovefeast held at Kingston about four days before Dr. Coke's departure, the number in society in this city amounted to 234.

In his last address to the congregations, both at Kingston and Spanishtown, he informed them "that, notwithstanding the opposition his friends had endured, and were likely to endure, it was their full determination to go forward in preaching the gospel; and that, in case they were perseveringly insulted, molested, and disturbed, he was resolved to appeal to the justice of the country for legal redress. And finally, if the avenues to justice were shut in Jamaica, he would apply in England at the fountain head, where he was fully assured that he should not be compelled to apply in vain; that, as to himself, his own personal feelings were of remote consideration. He considered himself as in the hand of God, and had no objection to suffer martyrdom, if this would tend to display the divine glory, and promote the Redeemer's kingdom." It is probable that this address had some considerable effect on those who heard it, and perhaps on others to whom the report was communicated; for he was informed by Mr. Werril, who came to take his leave while he was on board, that during three days he had been permitted to preach in peace.

But it was not merely in Jamaica that the hostile propensities of the human heart at this time manifested themselves against the word of eternal life. The vessel on board of which Dr. Coke was about to sail, had left St. Vincent's since his departure from that island. The captain informed him that, soon after he went to Jamaica, a banditti had broken by night into the Methodist chapel in St. Vincent's, and, after damaging the seats, had taken away the Bible, and carried it to the public gallows, from which it was found suspended the ensuing morning. The magistrates were so exasperated at this unprecedented act of baseness, that they advertised

an offer of a hundred pounds' reward for the discovery of the miscreants.

Another circumstance, which was communicated to Dr. Coke at this time, although it has no immediate connection with his life, may justly merit a niche in this page, as it tends to show that, although

'Skins may differ, yet affection
Dwells in blacks and whites the same.'

Several years prior to this period, the king of Mandingo, on the continent of Africa, had lost a daughter. Diligent search and unremitting inquiries were made after her in every direction, but no tidings could possibly be obtained. This circumstance led them to conclude that she had been stolen by some of the traders who dealt in flesh and blood. To ascertain this fact, one of her brothers engaged to undertake a voyage in one of the slave ships to the West Indies, that no method might be left untried to afford her relief, and give consolation to her afflicted family. His first voyage was fruitless, so that he was obliged to return with tidings that only tended to make the parents still more disconsolate. He, however, entered on a second voyage, being resolved to examine with more minuteness. During this tour he had the happiness to find her in Kingston. She had actually been stolen, as the family had conjectured; had grown somewhat reconciled at what she conceived to be her irretrievable destiny, and had married a free black. At the time this discovery was made, both she and her husband were members of the Methodist society, in which the latter was a class-leader. Mr. Hammet, from whom Dr. Coke received this interesting anecdote, had, prior to his illness, been favoured with several interviews with the African prince. He was just then about to depart to his native land with the joyful tidings, and to procure two slaves as the condition of his sister's liberation. When this was done, it was his intention to carry her again to Africa, and to induce her husband to accompany her.

Dr. Coke, in company with Mr. Hammet, sailed from Port Royal, in Jamaica, for Charleston, South Carolina, on the 27th of January, 1791; but their voyage was long, and dangerous in a high degree. Their first

exposure was to a long range of rocky islets, called the Martyrs, which extend along the Florida shore, nearly one hundred and forty miles in length, and about forty miles in breadth. Their vessel got entangled among these in the night, and two days elapsed before they could find their way into the open ocean.

Scarcely, however, had they escaped from the Martyrs, before the watch upon deck discovered about daybreak that they were almost on shore on the rocky coast of Cuba, not far from the Havanna. If the darkness of the night had continued about half an hour longer, without a miracle, their fate must have been inevitable. Providentially the wind continued favourable while they thus lay exposed to danger; but immediately after they had passed the Bahama strait, in which they were confined, a violent gale sprang up, against which, in their former situation, it would have been impossible, had their vessel kept her course, to escape destruction.

Surviving this gale, and escaping these hazards, they proceeded on their voyage until the 21st of February, when the captain knew they could not be far from land, although he was not well acquainted with the coast. To make some discovery of the shore, as the morning was foggy, the vessel was hauled into four fathoms of water, when about nine o'clock she struck against a sand bank, but from this she was soon got off without sustaining much damage. Within about half an hour she struck three times against another bank, but was again got free. About ten she struck again, and remained immovably fixed. "From this time till noon," says Dr. Coke, "she continued striking with such force that we could hardly stand on the deck; and great pieces were broken off from the false keel, and seen awfully floating on the water." The coast at this time was in full view, but it was about three miles distant. Happily for them the weather was moderate. The boats were now ordered out to seek assistance on shore; and in the first that left the vessel, Dr. Coke and his companion reached the land in safety, which they found to be Edisto Island, about fifty miles south of Charleston.

As no assistance could be rendered to the vessel until the next day, the captain and sailors deserted her in the evening, the former watching her from the shore through the night. During this night a violent tempest arose; but this storm, instead of beating her to pieces as was expected, in conjunction with the waves, drove her from the bank into the open sea, where she was found a few days afterward by some American sailors, who brought her safely into harbour; which, by the laws of the United States, entitled them to a third part of the cargo. From this vessel all Dr. Coke's luggage was taken safely on shore, and sent after him, according to the directions he had given.

Being once more delivered from perils by water, and receiving from the inhabitants of Edisto Island all the assistance and hospitality which their condition required, Dr. Coke and Mr. Hammet were conducted to Charleston by their unexpected friends. The time, however, which had been lost during their dangerous voyage, prevented them from being sufficiently early to attend the conference. But, as Dr. Coke was fully expected, the preachers agreed to stay one day longer than they had designed; and on that day he arrived, and joined their company.

In the course of this journey his visits and employment were much the same as those detailed in a preceding chapter. His time was chiefly occupied in attending conferences; preaching both in the towns and in the woods; travelling from place to place; and encountering difficulties which arose from the morasses, bogs, and rivers, that intersect a pathless desert.

From this general routine of duty he found an occasion to deviate toward the end of March, when he paid a visit to the Catawba Indians, a small nation, so called from their residing on the banks of the river Catawba. These Indians chiefly live together in one town; but their territory, which is about fifteen miles in extent, they generally let out to the white people. As they understood very little of the English language, they were informed by an interpreter that Dr. Coke intended to preach among them through this medium. To this they consented; and a rude tent was accordingly erected

for his accommodation. At this service most of the tribe attended ; but they did not appear to be interested in the truths that were delivered. The principal solicitude which they expressed was, to procure, if possible, some military assistance from the whites, to strengthen their forces against another tribe, with whom they were at war.

"Their general," says Dr. Coke, "who is a tall, grave old man, walked with a mighty staff in his hand. Around his neck he wore a narrow piece (I think) of leather, which hung down before, and was adorned with a great variety of bits of silver. He also had a silver breast-plate. Almost all the men and women wore silver nose-rings, hanging from the middle gristle of the nose, and some of them had little silver hearts hanging from the rings. In general they were dressed like the white people. But a few of the men were quite luxuriant in their dress, even wearing ruffles, and very showy suits of clothes made of cotton."* Their habitations he represents as appearing not uncomfortable, being far superior to the cabins of the Irish peasantry. Their household furniture was rather singular. They had chairs in abundance, but not a single table was to be procured from any of their cottages. It was intended to establish a school for the instruction of their children. But this attempt, like many others that have been made to civilize savage nations, finally proved abortive.

Having taken his leave of the Indians, and returned again to his regular path of duty, Dr. Coke, on the 30th of March, met a young man who had lately begun to preach, who furnished him with a little account which may stimulate some who read it to cast their bread on the waters, that it may be found after many days.

Some time in the year 1785, when Dr. Coke was travelling through Virginia, he happened to call at the house in which this young man then resided, with his mother and six brothers and sisters, not far from Williamsburg. At this time the whole family were ignorant of Methodism, and ignorant of God. On leaving their house Dr. Coke presented them with an extract of Mr.

* Dr. Coke's journal, p. 148.

Law's Treatise on the Nature and Design of Christianity. The perusal of this book had such an effect on their minds, that the whole family were stirred up to seek the Lord. The event was, that the mother, the preacher, six children who were married, and their husbands and wives, making fourteen in all, were converted to God, and became members of the Methodist society.

During the tour which Dr. Coke made at this time on the continent, he observed with pleasure that the work of God was in a prosperous condition in most parts of the United States. A considerable number of members was added to the society in almost every circuit; the congregations were large and orderly in most places; many preaching houses had been erected; the number of preachers was augmented; and the work extended to some towns and places which had not been previously visited. With regard to temporal concerns, although many chapels were involved in debt, their embarrassments were less pressing than they had been on former occasions, when the means of meeting the various demands that were made, were less adequate to their exigencies. In all these branches he was enabled to behold the superintending care of Providence, and to exact from all a tribute of gratitude to God.

To a soul so deeply interested in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom as his was, these prospects were truly animating. He felt their exhilarating effects in all their force; and was preparing to lay himself out more fully for God, when an unexpected event arrested his attention, and, for a season, blasted all his hopes.

He had been preaching on the evening of the 20th of April, at a place called Port Royal, in Virginia, and had engaged to preach about twelve miles distant at ten o'clock on the ensuing morning. But on returning, after the evening preaching, to the house of a merchant where he was to lodge, he was informed by him that the Philadelphia papers had just announced to the public the death of Mr. Wesley. Astonished at this intelligence, and unwilling to credit what he hoped might be false, he requested the gentleman to procure for him a sight of the paper. This was soon done; and, on perusing the paragraph, he was convinced from the manner of its

being written, that the unexpected tidings were mournfully true.

His plans on the continent being totally deranged by this circumstance, he made preparations for his immediate departure; and the next morning set off for New-York, in hopes that he might reach that port in time to procure a passage in the packet which was about to sail with the mails for England. On his arrival at Alexandria, he received a letter from home, confirming the truth of what the papers had circulated. From this place he proceeded to Baltimore, with a mind overwhelmed with sorrow that had deadened his feeling to the charms of nature, which the singing of birds, the progress of vegetation, and the fragrance of blossoms everywhere diffused around him. The loss of his friend, and the friend of the church of Christ, sat heavily on his heart, which could scarcely find relief in tears.

He reached Baltimore by Sunday, the 1st of May, and preached in the evening to a crowded audience, on the mournful occasion, from an appropriate passage in 2 Kings ii, 12: "And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Having taken a seat in the mail coach, he departed from Baltimore very early on Monday morning, but was somewhat indisposed during the day. The following morning, when he attempted to rise, he found himself totally unable to proceed; but, having received some medical assistance during the day, he seemed better; and, on the ensuing morning, pursued the coach on horseback, still hoping that he should reach New-York before the packet put to sea. But his complaint returning, he was compelled to remain at Wilmington another day, and this rendered all his efforts to reach the packet ineffectual.

Discovering the impossibility of gaining the packet, he now turned his face to Philadelphia; but on reaching this city he found that no ship was expected to sail for any part of England until some considerable time had elapsed. He therefore continued here nine days, preaching almost every evening, and sometimes in the morning, as well as three times on the Lord's day, waiting the departure of some ship that should carry him across

the Atlantic. At length, on the 14th of May, hearing that a ship was about to sail from Newcastle immediately for London, he hastened thither, and procured a passage; and taking leave of Mr. Asbury and several of the preachers, who had repaired to Newcastle to bid him farewell, sailed from the port, and after a pleasant voyage was put on shore at Falmouth by some fishermen, who fell in with the vessel in the English channel.

CHAPTER XII.

Dr. Coke hurt at the ungenerous treatment received on his arrival—Consoled by a letter from Mr. Asbury—Affairs at the conference succeeding Mr. Wesley's death conducted in peace—Difficulties about writing Mr. Wesley's Life—Narrative of this affair—Dr. Coke visits France—Observations on the productions of the country and morals of the inhabitants—Mission proves unsuccessful—Desired by the conference to undertake his Commentary—Sails again for America—General state of religion there—Revisits the West Indies—Door still shut in St. Eustatius—Persecuting edict in St. Vincent's—Affecting anecdotes of some negro children in Grenada and Nevis—Degraded state of morals in Hispaniola—Prospect in Jamaica still gloomy—Awful judgment on a scoffer at vital religion—Returns to England—Narrowly escapes a French privateer.

The supposed occasion of Dr. Coke's arrival in England at this particular crisis of the Methodist connection, though pleasing to some, was by no means gratifying to all the preachers. To the painful feelings which arose from this circumstance he was by no means insensible; but his attachment to the interests of religion was too strong to be overcome by these momentary conflicts; and his love for Methodism still remained unshaken, although many of its friends had brought his fidelity to the severest test. At the moment when his feelings were agitated by suspicions which tended to degrade his character, he might perhaps have appeared to many in an inauspicious light; but his steady perseverance in the paths of duty completely destroyed the surmises which were cherished to his disadvantage. Succeeding

years have corrected the error by confirming his integrity; and the progress of time has thrown around his name such a lustre as gold receives by passing through the fire.

Severe and irritating as these trials were to a mind like his, that was constantly alive to all the sensibilities which may be made the medium either of pain or pleasure, divine Providence kept a watchful eye over him, so that he was not tempted above what he was enabled to bear. The sufferings which arose from one quarter were counteracted by the consolations from another; so that the wounds which were inflicted by his associates at home were in a measure healed by the balm which grew in the western world. During many years his whole soul had been engaged in filling and supporting the missionary department of the church; and on every occasion the prosperity of Zion was to him an ample compensation for all the hardships he endured. We may therefore form some conception of his felicity and sympathy at receiving, while under this cloudy dispensation, the following letter from his associate in America. This letter is dated Georgetown, February 12th, 1791; and we may gather from a perusal of its contents, that their joys and sorrows were mutual, and that their confidence in each other was neither founded upon momentary considerations, nor to be destroyed by distance, although the Atlantic now lay between them.

"Reverend and Most Dear Sir,—If yet in time, this brings greeting. Rejoice with me that the last has been a year of general blessing to the church of God in this wilderness. We humbly hope two thousand souls were born of God, one of which is well ascertained in Jersey and York. East, west, north, and south the glory of God spreads.

"I have served the church upward of twenty-five years in Europe and America. All the property I have gained is two old horses, the constant companions of my toil six if not seven thousand miles every year. When we have no ferryboats, they swim the rivers. As to clothing, I am nearly the same as at first: neither have I silver, nor gold, nor any property. My confidential friends know I lie not in these matters. I am

resolved not to claim any property in the printing concern. Increase as it may, it will be sacred to invalid preachers, the college, and the schools. I would not have my name mentioned as doing, having, or being any thing but dust.

"I soar, indeed, but it is over the tops of the highest mountains we have, which may vie with the Alps. I creep sometimes upon my hands and knees up the slippery ascent; and to serve the church, and the ministers of it, what I gain is many a reflection from both sides of the Atlantic. I have lived long enough to be loved and hated, to be admired and feared.

"If it were not for the suspicions of some, and the pride and ignorance of others, I am of opinion I could make provision by collections, profits on books, and donations in land, to take two thousand children under the best plan of education ever known in this country. The Lord begins to smile on our Kingswood school. One promising young man is gone forth, another is ready; and several have been under awakenings. None so healthy and orderly as our children; and some promise great talents for learning. The obstinate and ignorant oppose, among preachers and people; while the judicious for good sense and piety, in church and state, admire and applaud. I am, with most dutiful respect as ever, your son in the gospel,

"Francis Asbury."

The English conference, which soon succeeded that of the Irish, had been anticipated with much anxiety, both by the friends and foes of Methodism; and the final result to which the questions that would be agitated might lead, had fully awakened the fears of the former, and the hopes of the latter. This conference was held at Manchester, and many of the preachers attended with such depression of spirits as they might be expected to feel while witnessing the closing grave of the connection. At this conference Mr. William Thompson was president, and Dr. Coke secretary. These, therefore, had a considerable share in the transactions of this eventful period, in which some new mode of government was to be found and established by the Methodist body, that should either combine the interests of all

parties, or else consign, with the death of Mr. Wesley, the whole connection to anarchy and dissolution. Through the providence of God, the former was triumphant; and to this, the apprehensions that were entertained in all probability contributed not a little. On this momentous occasion every one seemed unwilling to urge any argument that was not evidently calculated to promote the general welfare, and to ensure the perpetuity of the connection. Private views were therefore nobly abandoned; a division was prevented by the fears that it would take place; and the preachers repaired to their respective circuits, with more satisfaction than the hopes of the most sanguine had induced them to anticipate.

But, although this conference ended in peace, there was an affair which soon followed, that involved Dr. Coke in some degree of trouble; this was the writing of Mr. Wesley's Life. In the distribution which Mr. Wesley had made of his property, among other clauses he had inserted in his will the following words: "I give all my manuscripts to Thomas Coke, Dr. Whitehead, and Henry Moore, to be burned or published as they see good."

At the time of Mr. Wesley's death Dr. Coke was in America, and therefore nothing could be done, consistently with the import of the preceding clause, until his return. Mr. Wesley's executors were well aware that, as he had long sustained a public, a popular, and a celebrated character, several writers would gladly avail themselves of the earliest opportunity to publish his life; and thus appropriate to their private use the advantages of this publication, which ought in justice to be applied to the advancement of the work of God. They therefore circulated an advertisement, cautioning the public against receiving any such spurious account as might be offered; at the same time announcing that a true narrative of his life would soon appear, under their immediate sanction, compiled from the papers which he had left.

As Dr. Coke at this time had sent no work of any considerable magnitude into the world, their eyes were turned to Dr. Whitehead, to whose care the papers were

in part intrusted. He was therefore requested to turn his thoughts to this subject, and to make such preliminary arrangements for the work as the present circumstances of their situation would allow. This appointment was announced to the world, and the public were directed to view Dr. Whitehead as Mr. Wesley's acknowledged biographer.

Dr. Coke, on his arrival in London, was soon made acquainted with the steps that had been taken, and he readily concurred in the opinion of the executors. Mr. Moore also joined in the general harmony, and Mr. Wesley's papers were immediately put into Dr. Whitehead's possession.

Prior to this time a question had been agitated as to the remuneration that Dr. Whitehead was to receive for his literary labours; but the contracting parties had decided on nothing specific. On this question two propositions had been made by Dr. Whitehead himself. The first was, that he should receive from the conference one hundred guineas; and the second was, that, instead of receiving any stipulated sum, he should claim one half of the profits arising from the publication for two years, after which the work should be considered as the exclusive property of the conference.

To the first of these propositions Mr. Wesley's executors were willing to accede; but Dr. Whitehead, having taken possession of all the papers, insisted on the second, as the first had not been accepted when it was proposed. These questions, thus in agitation, were brought before conference; and in this assembly it was resolved that Dr. Whitehead should proceed with the work, but that his remuneration should consist in the sum originally proposed, without having any connection with the profits arising from the sale of the volume. At this conference it was also determined that nothing should be issued from the conference press until it had obtained the sanction of a select committee, that were appointed to inspect all papers that were prepared for publication. Dr. Whitehead soon perceived from this regulation that his biography must be submitted to the decision of this committee; and, availing himself of this pretext, that, in consequence of this submission, he

must altogether forego his independence as an author, he recalled the propositions which he had previously made.

Totally disliking these restrictions, and declining to accept the terms of remuneration on which conference had decided, he peremptorily refused to submit to either. And although the work was at this time in a state of forwardness, and proposals for publishing it had been circulated through the connection, in order to procure subscribers, Dr. Whitehead now threw off all disguise, and declared to the world that he would publish Mr. Wesley's Life solely on his own account, without submitting to any restrictions, and without expecting any other recompense than that which the merit of the work might obtain from an enlightened public. He was not, however, hostile to its being published through the book room; and he acknowledged that he would demand nothing more than one half of the profits. But he insisted that the copyright should be exclusively his own, and that no alteration whatever should be made in the manuscript without his express consent.

The executors of Mr. Wesley, having committed themselves with the public by the advertisements they had circulated, found themselves in a labyrinth from which they could not easily be extricated. They therefore consented to meet Dr. Whitehead's views, as to the pecuniary part, upon condition that the committee should approve of the manuscript which was then in hand. With this latter condition he positively refused to comply, and here their negotiations ended.

Affairs having come to this unfavourable issue, the executors of Mr. Wesley now turned their attention to Dr. Coke and Mr. Henry Moore, to whom the papers had been conjointly committed in trust, but out of whose reach they were now completely removed. Under these circumstances they were requested to write his Life; which they undertook and accomplished. It was finished and published in the year 1792, and met, as might naturally be expected, with a rapid and an extensive sale. Dr. Whitehead's Life of Messrs. Charles and John Wesley soon likewise made its appearance. The breach was afterward completely healed; and both works continue to be sold by the conference.

Amid these literary disputes and engagements Dr. Coke invariably kept in view the grand object of his life, the establishment of missions in the earth. The revolution which at this time had taken place in France, and awakened the attention of Europe, presented to the eye of speculation the prognostics of a new era in the world. The destruction of the bastile had captivated the friends of civil liberty; and the overthrow of popery had excited the smiles of those who had shed tears over the revocation of the edict of Nantz. Of this latter description was Dr. Coke, who thought this a favourable opportunity to attempt the establishment of a Protestant mission or ministry in Paris.

His hopes of success were not merely founded upon the revolution which was destined to disturb the tranquillity of nations, but principally upon the contents of a letter which had fallen into his hands. This letter had been written from Paris to Lady Huntingdon, requesting her to send a preacher to that city, and intimating the readiness of many to receive him, and the strong probability of his being made instrumental of much good. As Lady Huntingdon was dead, and no preacher had been sent, Dr. Coke thought this to be a strong call from Providence; especially as the abolition of intolerance by the revolution had placed a Protestant mission under the protection of the law.

Full of these views he proceeded to Jersey, accompanied by Mr. Gibson, a merchant of London, to take with him from the islands Mr. John de Queteville, a native of Jersey, who had been accustomed to preach in French, his vernacular tongue. As it became necessary that they should appear in character, Dr. Coke, immediately on his arrival, first ordained M. de Queteville, a deacon, and then a presbyter. This was done on the 22d of September, 1791; and the next day they embarked for Reniezville alias Grandville, on board of a cutter which they had hired for that purpose.

Landing about five o'clock in the evening of the same day, they were invited to visit an aged marquis, who was emaciated with the gout, and confined to his bed through the severity of his affliction. They found him easy of access, and anxious to receive spiritual advice;

and after praying with him and recommending to him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, he requested them to give him a Bible. With this request it was not in their power to comply; but they presented him with a prayer book, which he received with gratitude, and frankly acknowledged that he thought their religion better than his own. And so well pleased was he with their visit that he earnestly entreated them to call on him again whenever they came that way. But such an opportunity never returned. Having therefore been regaled with the choicest viands which his house afforded, they took their leave, and repaired on foot to a place called *Contance*, about six miles distant, at which place they did not arrive till dark.

Early the next morning they departed for *Courseauil*, a seaport town, in which Mr. W. Mahy had for some time been preaching to a Protestant congregation, which, with six others in the neighbouring parishes, furnished him with full employment. From this place, after ordaining Mr. Mahy, it was Dr. Coke's intention to proceed to Paris with Mr. Gibson only, and, after making his observations, and procuring a room, to send for M. de Queteville to hasten to the metropolis to assist him. This plan was, however, after some deliberation abandoned, and Dr. Coke, Mr. Gibson, and M. de Queteville proceeded onward together.

On taking their leave of Mr. Mahy, they travelled the next day to *Caen*, a distance of about twelve miles, intending to take coach from thence, and hasten immediately to the metropolis. On their arrival at Caen they found that neither coach nor any public carriage whatever was to be procured. This was occasioned by the arrival, on the preceding day, of a great number of young French noblemen; who, having failed in their attempt to effect a counter revolution, were hastening to the frontier to join the emigrant troops. These in their way had seized every vehicle that could be procured to expedite their flight.

Dr. Coke and his companions had not remained long in this city, before an old Protestant gentleman, hearing of their situation, procured for them a man, who, with a feeble carriage and two miserable horses, engaged to

take them to Paris in three days. After sleeping one night at *Caen*, they then departed for the metropolis, in company with a member of the national assembly, who desired to be taken with them in the same conveyance.

Being thus heavily laden, and travelling exceedingly slow, they had an opportunity of making observations on every object that presented itself to their view. Equally alive to the beauties of art and the charms of nature, Dr. Coke entered in his journal some memoranda of every thing that struck his attention, resolving, in case the mission succeeded, to publish on his return an exact account of whatever appeared remarkable in the course of his journey.

Among these, he noticed many curious antiquities; many rich and costly churches; many superb and magnificent buildings; and made such remarks on architectural decorations, as would have rendered his journal highly interesting. Nor was he inattentive to the beauties which nature had lavished on the surface of the country with the most bountiful profusion. He made memoranda on the stately forests, the extended plains, the beautiful meadows, the rich and luxuriant pastures, the highly cultivated enclosures, and the fruitful vineyards through which they passed. These scenes, and a description of them, furnished him with employment by day; and in the evening, his time was divided between reading and writing letters to his friends in England.

That the state of public and private morals was at this time exceedingly depraved, may be gathered from the following anecdote:—On the first night they all slept at *Evereux*, a large city, where, on entering a parlour, they saw the portraits of three women who brought them their supper. These were presented for their choice. The representative of the people, who seemed perfectly well acquainted with this mode of accommodating travellers, soon made his selection and retired, leaving the others, perhaps not a little surprised at the stupidity of their foreign guests.

It was not till the third day, about noon, they entered Paris. Their first effort, after taking some refreshment, was to find out, if possible, the persons who had

written the letter to Lady Huntingdon. These were found to be two English schoolmasters, who seemed fully persuaded, that if a preaching room could be procured, it would soon be filled with attentive hearers. Relying on their information, Dr. Coke soon found what he thought would be a convenient house, which he hired for a month. But as it could not be occupied immediately, on visiting a suppressed church which was then to be sold for 120*l*., and which would contain about 2,000 or 2,500 persons, he engaged to purchase it, not doubting that it would soon be crowded.

The hired room, in which the first attempts were to be made, being got ready, Dr. Coke advertised his intention to commence preaching in it at an appointed time. The situation of this room was close by the river Seine, and fronting a street full of people, so that without any advertisement a large congregation might have been collected in a few minutes. M. de Queteville being much better acquainted with the French idiom than Dr. Coke, it was thought proper for him to deliver the first sermon. They accordingly went at the time appointed; but were mortified to discover, that neither curiosity nor any better motive could induce more than thirty-six persons to compose their whole congregation; and in this number were included the two schoolmasters and their families, and a few nominal Protestants, who might be compared to the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision.

On concluding his discourse, M. de Queteville informed the congregation, that on the ensuing day, Dr. Coke, an English divine, would read to them a sermon of his own composition, in the French tongue. But their attention was not to be excited. When the time arrived, they could procure no more than six hearers, though they were surrounded by the shops of mechanics, who gazed on them as they went in, but who had not curiosity enough to follow them, and to hear what was to be delivered.

On finding, from these unsuccessful efforts, that the report which the letter had transmitted to England was contradicted by what they had experienced, they began to suspect that the motives of the schoolmasters, in sending for a preacher, were not of the purest com-

plexion. This was afterward found to be the case. Their school was reduced to a low condition, and they wanted to resort to some expedient that should raise their reputation, and increase the number of their pupils. They hoped for an orator who should excite public attention, and awaken in the minds of the rising generation an earnest desire to learn the English tongue. To this ignoble purpose they contrived to make the gospel of Christ subservient.

Being fully convinced that they had nothing more to do in Paris, than to procure, upon honourable terms, a revocation of the bargain that had been made for the church, Dr. Coke now turned his attention to this point, and happily found the difficulties much less than his fears had led him to anticipate. To annul this agreement, a favourable incident at this time occurred.

When Dr. Coke advertised in the public prints his intention to preach in Paris, the advertisement happened to strike the eye of a Miss Freeman Shepperd, who had known something of Dr. Coke many years before in London. This lady, who for some time resided in France, had retired into a convent in which she became a boarder, to escape the miseries and dangers that accompanied the revolution. On recollecting his name, she sent him and his companions an invitation to dine with her at the convent in the fauxbourg St. Germaine. Of this they accepted; and on their arrival they were received with the utmost politeness, and entertained according to the established manners of the place.

In the course of their conversation, Dr. Coke mentioned to this lady their disappointment on coming to Paris, arising from an inability to procure a congregation; and stated also his wish to have the church which he had purchased taken off his hands. On hearing his case, she caused a letter to be written, addressed to the principal agent of the convention, who, with many others, had the management of the suppressed churches, abbeys, and convents committed to his care. In this letter, the peculiar embarrassment of her countryman respecting the church was set forth; who, it was stated, had been deceived by a letter that had promised to a Protestant minister a congregation, which could not be

procured. And, finally, as it would not be to the disadvantage of the agent to annul the bargain, he would oblige the writer, and all who were interested in the issue, by taking the church again into his possession.

Furnished with this letter, Dr. Coke repaired to the agent, and soon found that it had not been written in vain. With a degree of politeness that could hardly be expected, the latter made no difficulty in retracing his former steps, and complying with the wishes which Dr. Coke expressed. Instead of demanding money, he only requested his attendance a few times at the office, that he might ratify by his signature the various formalities through which they were obliged to pass. To this Dr. Coke, in every necessary instance, submitted; but as his presence was required in London, and he could be of no further service in France, he returned to England in company with Mr. Gibson, leaving M. de Queteville to complete the business. This being done, he also retired from the country, carrying with him a full persuasion that the French were too much enamoured with their revolution, and too much enlightened by their new philosophy, to regard either the truths of Christianity or the salvation of their souls.

Dr. Coke, on his return to London, employed the remaining part of this year, and the early part of the following, in soliciting assistance for the foreign missions, while travelling through the country, and preparing, in conjunction with Mr. Moore, the life of Mr. Wesley for the press. This volume, as it has been already stated, was published in the year 1792. Scarcely was this biography finished, before another work, more voluminous, more important, and more deeply interesting to the world, was recommended to Dr. Coke's serious notice.

At the conference of 1792, it was hinted in the stationing committee, that a commentary on the Bible, which should preserve a consistency of character throughout, without deviating from those views which God had given of himself, of his being loving to every man, and of his tender mercies over all his works, would be, to the growing body of the Methodists, an invaluable acquisition. The importance of the suggestion was instantly perceived, and readily admitted by all.

The proposition was almost immediately submitted to conference, and the measure received with unanimous approbation.

The necessity and practical tendency of such a work as they thus contemplated, being admitted, the next question that appeared for consideration was, to whose care the compilation of this commentary should be intrusted. The name of Dr. Coke, and the character which he had, for many years, sustained in the connection, could not but point him out to general notice and to general approbation. Instead, therefore, of making his competency for the arduous undertaking a subject of debate, his eligibility was silently allowed by a kind of involuntary acquiescence, and he was requested to turn his attention immediately to the subject, to collect materials, and to prepare the work.

The principal restrictions under which he was laid in this undertaking were, to comprise the work within about three quarto volumes, that it might neither be so tedious as the expositions of Gill and Henry, nor so laconic as the annotations with which Mr. Wesley had already favoured the world. Within this reasonable compass, it was prudently conceived, that ample room would be allowed for the elucidation of obscure passages, and for such practical inferences as would answer every useful purpose with those into whose hands it was most likely to fall. To the general principle of these propositions, Dr. Coke, after some deliberation, acceded. The work was accordingly undertaken, and almost immediately begun; but, through the constant pressure of his other concerns, it was not completed till nearly fifteen years afterward. And, even then, it had so far exceeded the limits originally prescribed, that the conference refused to print it, unless it underwent an abridgment; and to this, as no other fault was found in the work, Dr. Coke refused to submit. The consequence therefore was, that he printed it on his own account, and met from a generous and enlightened public all that support which, from existing circumstances, he had reason to expect. Of this commentary we shall take more particular notice hereafter, when we examine his various publications.

Dr. Coke still kept a steady eye upon the missions in which he had been engaged, and lost no opportunity of promoting the spiritual welfare of the heathen world. Influenced by this sacred principle, the termination of the conference was to him a signal of departure to the islands of the West Indies. The money he had collected during his present residence in England had enabled him to rescue the missionary fund from the pressure of its embarrassments, and to take with him on his present voyage another minister, who was willing to preach to the negroes the unsearchable riches of Christ.

This indefatigable man sailed from Gravesend, with his companion in the patience and tribulation of Jesus, on the 1st of September, 1792. The vessel proceeded to the American continent, and during this voyage his time was chiefly employed in making arrangements for the commentary he had undertaken. On reaching America he was occupied in much the same manner as on former occasions. He found the work of God in a prosperous state; he attended conferences, travelled over a vast tract of country, was exposed to many imminent dangers, was delivered from serious accidents, found many friends, and was enabled, through the whole of his tour, to rejoice in the God of his salvation.

On the 12th of December, having finished his visits in the United States, he sailed from the continent on board a vessel bound for St. Eustatius, at which place he arrived on the 31st. In this island the scourge of persecution was still lifted up. No liberty to preach could possibly be obtained; and some negro women, not long before his arrival, had been severely flogged, merely because they had attended a prayer meeting. Many, notwithstanding, still held fast their integrity, and several classes occasionally met, without being exposed to any interruption. Through these means, the power of religion flourished in private, amid the storms that assailed the profession of Christianity from without.

Nor was the tempest of persecution confined exclusively to the island of St. Eustatius. Dr. Coke, on reaching St. Christopher's, the 2d of January, 1793, was instantly informed, that the banners of the prince of darkness had been unfurled in St. Vincent's, and that

Mr. Lumb, the missionary, was then a prisoner in the public jail. In proceeding thither to visit his imprisoned friend, he touched at Nevis and Dominica, in the latter of which places no missionary had been for nearly three years. There were, however, many pious souls, but they were left as sheep without a shepherd, and the time of their being revisited was not yet come.

On landing at St. Vincent's, Dr. Coke found Mr. Lumb in close confinement, in company with a malefactor, to whom another of the latter description was very shortly added. The crime of which Mr. Lumb had been guilty was that of preaching in the Methodist chapel to the negroes and others who attended. The law which had been passed had forbidden any one to preach, the rectors of the parishes only excepted, who had not procured a license from the legislature of the island. At the same time it had enacted that no license should be granted to any person who had not resided twelve months on the spot. For the punishment of delinquents this law had levied a fine of ten Johannes, (18*l.*) or an imprisonment for a term not more than ninety, nor less than thirty days, for the first offence. For the second offence, such corporal punishment as the court should think proper to inflict, together with banishment from the island; and, to finish the catalogue, a return from banishment was inevitable death. Such was the substance of this law, which actually existed in this British colony so late as the year 1793!

That Mr. Lumb had incurred its penalty, by violating its precepts, was too plain to be denied. His enemies had noticed his offence, and he was now imprisoned. But persecution frequently defeats its own designs, and ultimately promotes the interest of that cause which it endeavours to destroy. On this occasion, the indignant feelings of the white inhabitants were expressed in terms of decided disapprobation, even though they were not friends of Methodism; and among the negroes a desire to hear the gospel seemed to increase in proportion to the coercive measures made use of to debar them from it.

In the course of this tour, Dr. Coke paid a visit to his pious friend the Rev. Mr. Dent, in the island of Grenada,

through whose assistance and fostering care, religion continued to flourish in the midst of surrounding vice. While he was on this island, an affecting anecdote occurred, which he thus relates—"Mr. D., who, with his amiable lady, lives quite a retired life, thought his family stood in need of another servant girl. He therefore went one day to a sale of negroes, and fixing his eye on a girl about ten years of age, said to her, 'Will you come with me?' The poor child, who was totally unacquainted with the English language, seemed nevertheless to understand him, and nodded her head. He then conversed with the proprietor about some other negroes, but afterward recollecting himself, he turned round again to the girl, and said to her, 'Well, will you come with me?' The little naked child immediately threw her arms around him, and burst into tears. His heart was exceedingly touched, and he purchased her, and brought her home. She was immediately well clothed; and, before I left the island, could speak several words of English, and had begun to sew."

In the island of Nevis another anecdote, somewhat similar in description, but still more affecting, was communicated by a gentleman at whose house Dr. Coke occasionally lodged. Mr. N., of that island, having attended a sale for negroes, purchased a company, or in the colonial dialect, a gang, from a Guinea ship that had just brought this cargo to market, among whom was a little girl. Some time afterward he attended another sale, and purchased an additional number from another slave ship. When the negroes that were procured from this last vessel were conducted to the estate, a girl in this company fixed her eyes with much earnestness on her who had been brought in the first, and seemed to be particularly affected. The eye of the former soon attracted that of the latter; their gaze became mutual; and they stood motionless for some time, surveying each other in attentive silence. At length, as if satisfied by their mutual recognition, and animated by an instinctive impulse, they recovered from their mute astonishment, and rushed into each other's arms, displaying, amid descending tears, all the endearments of natural affection. On disengaging them from each

other's embrace, it appeared, on inquiry, that these forlorn children, who had thus accidentally met in chains on a foreign shore, were *sisters*.

On the 9th of February, the preachers assembled at Antigua, where the gospel still continued to flourish, and began their conference, which lasted five days. At this time twelve missionaries were employed in ten of the islands, and the total number in society amounted to 6,570.

From the island of Antigua, Dr. Coke repaired to Barbadoes, and found the members in society, though few in number, truly alive to God. From Barbadoes, the vessel in which he sailed proceeded to Jamaica, carrying with her an account of the commencement of war with France. In their voyage thither they ran very near Hispaniola, in which island it appeared, from one on board who had lately visited this distracted colony, that the standard of morals was reduced to the lowest degradation. It may perhaps be doubted whether the cities of the plain had ever flaunted more filthy abominations in the face of day, than were too frequently practised by the licentious inhabitants. Such unparalleled atrocities, as language must not express, would seem to call for some signal calamity to mark the vengeance of Heaven. The island has indeed been since taken from the French, and given to the negroes, by a train of circumstances which display, in an awful manner, the interposition of incensed Omnipotence.

Arriving at Jamaica, Dr. Coke visited various parts of the island ; and alternately met with such clouds and sunshine as checker both the natural and the moral world. In some places his prospects were bright and pleasing, but in several others he had more ground for his wishes than his hopes. Throughout this large island the number in society was but small, both whites and blacks not much exceeding 200. But persecution, though sanctioned by mobs and gentlemen, had not yet entrenched itself under legislative authority, in the form of law.

While Dr. Coke was travelling through this island, he was informed of an awful incident which occurred about twelve months before at a place called *Salem*, in

the state of New-Jersey, on the American continent. At this place, in which the Methodists had erected a chapel, they had frequently been disturbed by mobs. But on making application to the magistrates, they had obtained such effectual relief that the rioters were obliged to have recourse to some new expedient to accomplish their purposes, without rendering themselves amenable to justice. The method to which they resorted was this—to assemble together in a place of their own, in order to turn experimental religion into a farce. In this burlesque on religion, the persons present *acted* band meetings, class meetings, and lovefeasts, to the great entertainment of the profane congregation ; who, with correspondent irreverence, and much apparent satisfaction, enjoyed this new species of theatrical mirth.

It happened one night, while they were performing a band meeting, that a young *actress* stood upon one of the benches to speak her pretended experience. At length, after having said much to command the mirth of the delighted audience, she exclaimed with mock solemnity, at the same time beating her breast, "Glory be to God, I have found peace ; I am sanctified ; and am now fit to die." Scarcely had this unhappy girl uttered these words, before she actually dropped from the bench, and was taken up a lifeless corpse.

Struck with this awful visitation, the auditors were instantly seized with inexpressible terror, and every face was covered with consternation and dismay. The assembly immediately broke up. And, in the consciousness of having gone beyond the bounds of common profaneness, every one silently and sneakingly retired to his respective habitation, except the mournful few who were left behind to take charge of the melancholy victim. From this moment all persecution was at an end in Salem, and not a tongue was afterward heard either against the gospel or any of its friends.* May such awful examples prove a warning to others, how, in the midst of profane jocularity, they attempt to turn the religion of Jesus Christ into an indecent farce!

Dr. Coke having now finished his tour on the conti-

Dr. Coke's journal, p. 186.

nent, and paid his intended visit to the West India islands, prepared to return to England, having his mind deeply impressed with the awful condition of the inhabitants of St. Eustatius, and of those also who lived in St. Vincent's, in which island Mr. Lumb was now a prisoner. To procure, if possible, some relief for the former, he formed a resolution to visit Holland; and to obtain deliverance for the latter he determined to present his case to the British throne. Full of these resolutions, he procured a passage on board of a packet bound for England, and sailed from Jamaica on the 14th of April, 1793. From this port he might have had a passage free of all expense, if he could have waited until a convoy was ready to take the vessel in which he was offered these gratuitous accommodations, under her care. But, being apprehensive that he should not reach England in time to attend the conference, he was obliged to decline the offer of his generous friend.

During his absence from his native land he had hitherto done but little toward the commentary. In his voyage to the continent he had made some few arrangements, and had explored the sources of his information. But while on the continent, and visiting the islands, his time had been too much engrossed to leave room for any literary pursuits. On board of the packet he now hoped to find some leisure, and the work before him was sufficient to furnish every moment with employment. To a person not habituated to voyages, although the cabin of a ship may be congenial to study when the weather is serene, the rolling of the vessel must render much writing an unpleasant task. But, as Dr. Coke had traversed the Atlantic several times, he was somewhat prepared for these inconveniences; and the multiplicity of his engagements compelled him to seize every fragment of time which life afforded.

Nothing of any consequence occurred during their voyage, until they arrived at the mouth of the English channel. Having reached this latitude, as war had broken out between England and France, all on board felt some anxiety lest the packet should be assailed by one of the enemy's cruisers of superior force. On the 4th of June, a sailor who had been stationed at the

masthead informed those on deck that a sail was then in view. The captain, on hearing this, instantly mounted the ladder, and remained at the masthead for a considerable time, watching the movements of the ship that was in sight. On descending from his point of observation, he intimated that, according to the best judgment he could form, the ship which excited their attention was a French privateer; and that she was at that instant pursuing them with crowded sails. As the packet was not of sufficient force to withstand the privateer, so far as her strength could be ascertained, nothing remained but for them to spread all the canvass their ship could bear, and press her toward the point of her destination. This pursuit and this flight continued about twenty-four hours, at the end of which the privateer had so gained upon the packet that the distance between them was not more than a mile and a half. Alarmed at the perilous situation in which they found themselves placed, despair and confusion prevailed among the passengers and sailors, who all concluded that nothing less than a miracle could prevent them from being carried captive into a foreign land. But deliverance was much nearer than either their hopes or their fears had anticipated. For in that eventful crisis, when they expected to surrender themselves prisoners of war, to their inexpressible joy a British fleet, consisting of eleven sail of the line, bound for the Mediterranean, under the command of Lord Hood, appeared in sight. The privateer, on making this discovery, instantly gave up the pursuit, and sailed toward the coast of France; while, with exhilarated spirits, the sailors conducted the packet into the midst of the British squadron. Soon after this, they reached Falmouth, where Dr. Coke landed on the 6th of June, 1793, with a heart glowing with gratitude to God for all his mercies.

CHAPTER XIII.

Observations on the persecuting edict of St. Vincent's, and conduct of Mr. Lumb—Dr. Coke applies to his majesty in council for a repeal of the law—Government inquires into the character of the West India missionaries—Satisfactory replies given by the governors of the islands—Edict disallowed in council—Dr. Coke supports innovations on the old plan of Methodist discipline—Proceeds with his commentary—Repairs to Holland respecting the affairs of St. Eustatius—Character of the Methodists, given by the Right Honourable Henry Dundas—Letter from Dr. Coke to Dr. Maclaine at the Hague—Application to the Dutch government proves unsuccessful—Reasons which induced Dr. Coke to undertake the Foulah settlement—Progress of this mission, and cause of its failure—Reflections on this unfortunate adventure.

It has been noticed in the preceding chapter, that when Dr. Coke paid his last visit to St. Vincent's he found Mr. Lumb immured in the common jail, for preaching the gospel. On his departure from this island, he was compelled to leave him in the same state of confinement; as it was not in his power to procure the liberation of his imprisoned friend, but by paying an exorbitant fine, which would seem to acknowledge the justice of the law; and they scorned to do an action which should admit of such an interpretation.

To all laws, there are two ways of yielding a certain species of obedience; the one is by complying with their precepts, the other is by submitting to their penalties. In the first case, the subject is free, and acts without compulsion; but in the second he is passive, and only suffers what he cannot avoid. Mr. Lumb had preferred the latter, in the painful alternative of his situation; and Dr. Coke, who visited him in prison, encouraged him to persevere, while he repaired to the mother country, to try some expedients for his liberation, that were likely to be more advantageous to all, and to the cause in which they were mutually engaged, than if he had remained his companion in the jail, and wasted his time in ineffectual condolence.

Previously to the enacting of this law, no missionary could have been more respected than Mr. Lumb; and

no society in the West Indies was in a more flourishing condition than that of St. Vincent's. Nearly a thousand slaves had stretched out their hands to God; and throughout the island, the negroes seemed everywhere ready to receive the gospel. This was the circumstance which probably gave the alarm to some enemies of the Redeemer, and led them to use clandestine means to hurry the act through the house, at a time when a considerable number of the legislators had retired to their habitations.

It does not appear to have been the real desire of any, even of the firmest supporters of the law, to imprison Mr. Lumb. He was too much respected to render such a consequence either popular or desirable; but they were anxious to prevent his preaching, and hoped, by the terror of the edict, to banish him from the island. As a proof that his imprisonment was an unpopular measure, two gentlemen on one occasion paid him a visit while Dr. Coke was present. On noticing their respectability, he made some observations on their condescension: but their reply was, "Sir, it is no dishonour to visit this gentleman in a jail."

Mr. Lumb having continued in jail during the period assigned by the law, was ordered to be set at liberty by the magistrates, on condition of his paying the common fees. But having resolved to do nothing that should imply a voluntary compliance with this edict of legal injustice, he peremptorily refused to accept his liberation on such terms. Exasperated at this unconquered resolution, the magistrates who had committed him, and who had offered to pay two-thirds of the penalty he had incurred at the time of his first imprisonment, sent him word, that unless he paid the fees he should "rot in jail." He was in consequence kept one day beyond the time of his specified confinement; but remaining inflexible, he was then discharged.

But his release from prison was only a release either to silence or to voluntary departure. The law was still in force; and persecution was not to be removed either by justice or humanity. He was therefore compelled to adopt the latter, and to quit the island and his friends, having little ground to believe that a missionary would

ever be again permitted to address the inhabitants in the name of the Lord. The consequences of this law were soon felt throughout the society. Many indeed continued steadfast, even while their leader was imprisoned, and after he had taken his leave. But a far greater number, forgetting the Lord who bought them, unhappily joined their old companions, and turned aside from the holy commandment which they had been taught to obey.

Dr. Coke, on leaving St. Vincent's, kept continually in view the melancholy situation of the inhabitants, of the society, and of Mr. Lumb. And so deeply was the impression engraven on his mind, that no change of scene, no multiplicity of concerns, no variety of engagements or employments, could ever erase it from his memory, or ever free him from the ghost of persecution with which he continued to be haunted during his voyage across the Atlantic.

On his return to England in June, it was one of his earliest cares to make out a plain statement of this case, and lay a memorial before his majesty in council; and to give this memorial full effect, he made a personal application to several members of the executive government. This memorial and these applications awakened the attention of the council. But that no step might be taken with undue precipitation, they issued orders to the colonial minister to forward letters immediately to all the governors of the West India islands, to make particular inquiries into the general conduct of all the Methodist missionaries in their respective departments.

On the part of government this was certainly a judicious step; but on that of the missionaries, the source of information appeared in a doubtful light. The governors, from the elevation of their stations, might be justly considered as rising above the local prejudices of subordinate power. But, deriving their information from men whose interest might tempt them to give a deceitful colouring to the report, their ultimate replies might have been erroneous, although their fidelity should be unimpeached. It is from causes like these that injurious statements are frequently given, and that pure intentions are made the instruments of designing men,

in the accomplishment of purposes over which justice weeps, and which humanity shudders to behold.

Truth, it may be justly remarked, sometimes imposes commands which integrity dares not disobey. The overruling providence of God produces unexpected issues, and vindicates the cause of afflicted virtue, through the agency of men who both disobey and despise her precepts. Such appears to have been the result of the present inquiry. The distinct replies which were given by the governors, have not been made public; but the effects which have followed clearly prove that their aggregate testimony was highly favourable. And perhaps these independent and propitious declarations, when taken in connection with the condition of the slaves,—the prejudices of the planters,—the suspicions which interest excited,—and the persecuting law that had been enacted, furnish one of the most exalted compliments that was ever paid in the West Indies to the utility of Methodism, and to the good conduct of the missionaries. May it long continue to operate as an example to all governors, to walk in the same path of honourable integrity, and to furnish a lesson to all missionaries, so to conduct themselves in the eyes of their secret observers as to deserve such testimonies of approbation!

On the 31st of August, 1793, Dr. Coke, in company with five or six preachers then established in London, waited on the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, then one of his majesty's principal secretaries of state, to know the result of that memorial which had been previously presented. To this memorial and to this inquiry they had the pleasure of receiving the following answer:—

"That his majesty in council had been graciously pleased to disannul the act of the assembly of St. Vincent's, and that his majesty's pleasure would be notified by the first packet that sailed to the West Indies."

Thus was religious liberty raised, by the voice of the sovereign, in triumph over the private efforts of oppressive violence. Such acts of royal interposition enthrone the monarch in the hearts of his subjects, and bind from the centre to the extremity of his empire, by ties of the most indissoluble nature, the affections of a grateful

people, whom his munificence has loaded with so many favours.

At the conference held this year in Leeds, Dr. Coke acted as secretary, and took a distinguishing part in an important question that was agitated in this assembly. Hitherto the Methodists had followed the advice and example of Mr. Wesley; and, with some few exceptions, had abstained from having preaching during church hours,—from introducing baptism and the Lord's supper,—and from burying their dead. From this rule many were now disposed to deviate. Both sides of this question had many able advocates; and perhaps few subjects have ever been debated in conference, in which more force of argument, comprehensiveness of thought, and energy of expression, have been displayed than on the present occasion. Dr. Coke took the side which countenanced innovations on the old plan; and, from the zeal and activity which on all occasions marked his conduct, rendered himself so conspicuous as to become unpopular with those whom he opposed. And although the question was in some degree decided in his favour, the effects of his advocation were sorely felt by him in his future application for pecuniary aid in behalf of the missions. He saw, when it was too late, the consequence of his own activity in the support of measures which the peculiarity of his own situation should have left to the decision of others. Experience became his instructer; and the lessons which it taught induced him to adhere to the resolutions which he formed.

Being somewhat disentangled from the unpleasant consequences in which this debate and its effects had involved him, Dr. Coke devoted his time more assiduously to his commentary, which was yet in no great state of forwardness. But his intense application to this work did not make him forget the cause of the missions, which looked chiefly to him for support. Travelling, therefore, from town to town, preaching frequently, and sometimes begging from door to door, left him but few moments of leisure. Every fragment of his time was employed; and the hour that consigned others to repose, occasionally called him to his study, where he could quietly remain to collect materials for his

work, and write letters to his numerous correspondents. Nor did he, amid these various avocations, forget the unhappy state of St. Eustatius. He saw its inhabitants deprived of the gospel, through the tyranny of its governor; but how to obtain redress for them was a question which he could not easily answer. In making his appeal in behalf of St. Vincent's he had been successful: but he had then appealed to a British council, and a British monarch. On the present occasion he must present a memorial to a foreign power, in a foreign land, where his name was scarcely known, and where he had no foundation on which to rest his hopes of success, but on the humanity of the cause he was about to plead, and an unshaken confidence which he placed in the overruling providence of God.

Slender as this foundation might appear, and as it in reality did appear in the eyes of many, he determined to visit Holland, to seek redress and protection against the tyranny of the governor of St. Eustatius. Having formed this resolution, he sailed from England, and, reaching the seat of the Dutch government, presented his memorial, and solicited their official interference. In proceeding thus he was furnished with directions by Dr. Maclaine, a pious minister at the Hague, the celebrated translator of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, to whom he found access through some letters of recommendation which he carried from England. From this gentleman he received much personal kindness, though it was not in his power to add much to his prospect of success. But, whatever the result might be, he was supported by the rectitude of his own intentions, and by anticipating the pleasure which his own reflections would afford, that he had left no method untried to accomplish his purpose, even though disappointment should ultimately frustrate his hopes.

Actuated by this principle, he embraced an opportunity that presented itself of waiting on the stadtholder, the present king of the Netherlands, who admitted him to an interview, and listened to his petition. But nothing could be inferred from his doubtful observations, to furnish a pleasing presage, that toleration would be extended to the inhabitants of St. Eustatius.

Having waited some considerable time in vain for a reply to his memorial, his expectations began to sink. They were, however, somewhat revived by an intimation that the Dutch government was solicitous of obtaining, from some public character in England, the general estimation in which Dr. Coke and his associates were held in their native land. To satisfy this inquiry, an application was made to the same statesman who had announced to them the repeal of the edict in St. Vincent's. The opinion of this gentleman is expressed in the following letter :—

"*Whitehall, Feb.* 2, 1794.

"SIR,—The united society of Methodists, late in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, have represented to me, that in some communications with the government of the United Provinces, they were desirous of being furnished with my sentiments in respect to them.

"I have lately had some communications with this society, who are members of the Church of England, and it is with great satisfaction I can bear testimony to the loyalty of their principles and conduct. And if I may form an opinion of their future demeanour by their past behaviour, I can well assure myself that they will in no instance deviate from that rectitude and obedience to the laws, which have hitherto marked the character of this society. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant, HENRY DUNDAS.

"*Hon. Wm. Elliot.*"

Clear, unequivocal, and expressive as the preceding testimony was, it was insufficient to remove from the minds of the Dutch legislators that suspicion which they had been led to entertain on the propriety of introducing a foreign mission into their islands. Their language, indeed, was less severe and decisive than that of the governor of St. Eustatius; but the same intolerant principles were conspicuous in each department. It was this indecision that kept alive a lingering hope, and induced Dr. Coke to continue longer in Holland than he would have stayed if a positive refusal had been given to his request on his first application.

Taught by experience, we frequently find that our wishes have a considerable influence on our judgments;

and, under this amiable delirium, that suspense may animate hope and keep it alive, even in the suburbs of despair. Fascinated with this decoy, Dr. Coke continued in Holland till the end of March, at a considerable expense, still flattering himself that the Dutch government would accede to his measures, and ultimately promote his benevolent designs. Neither was he fully awakened from this pleasing expectation when he finally departed from the foreign shore, and sailed for his native land. He had learned, indeed, to moderate his hopes; but he had not yet been taught wholly to suppress them. The meteor still glimmered in his sight, but it had begun to fade; and he consigned the ultimate accomplishment of his feeble hopes to the care of Dr. Maclaine, to whom he addressed the following letter when on the eve of his departure:—

"*Helvoetsluys*, *March* 22, 1794.

"MY VERY DEAR SIR,—I sit down for the satisfaction of my own mind to write you a few lines, before I finally take my leave of this country. Indeed I should think twenty visits nothing, either in respect to time or expense, if I might thereby succeed in promoting the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Nor do I think that the directors of the Dutch West India Company will, in the only instance in which they can serve the Redeemer, prevent the enlargement of his kingdom by prohibiting others from embarking in so good and humane a cause.

"I do assure you, my dear sir, that it affords me much pleasure, and saves me from much pain which suspense would otherwise occasion, that the cause is now, under God, committed into your hands. Though my acquaintance with you has been but short, yet I have observed enough to see clearly that I have in you one on whom I can rely with an unshaken confidence. And, as our respective situations in life prevent our enjoying much personal acquaintance here below, it gives me delight to think that we shall have one grand ministerial labour, in which we may, in our respective lines of influence, unite:—namely, in the conversion of the negroes throughout the empire of the Seven United Provinces.

"I intend to take the liberty (after consent is obtained) of sending you a minute account of the progress of this work for the conversion of the negroes in the Dutch colonies and islands. This will serve to stir up our minds to the kindest remembrance of each other, till we meet to spend an eternity in our Father's kingdom. And as sometimes civil governors are more extensively useful in the guidance of large colonial concerns in distant parts than they can be even at home; so we may be more honoured instruments of glorifying God, by collecting a large flock for Christ out of this naughty world in a distant country, than we can possibly be in our more confined circles at home.

"There is nothing, I am persuaded, has so great a tendency to accomplish this as the sending out faithful missionaries, who breathe the true apostolic spirit; who count not their lives dear to themselves, so they may win souls. Each of their names is *Legion*. Such we have among us, who want not to serve a party; but through Almighty grace desire only to be so employed in any part of the world, at home or abroad, as to bring to God as many souls as possible.

"The packet is just going to sail; I intended filling my paper. God bless you. When you remember your friends before the gracious throne, sometimes, at least, remember me. I shall not forget you in my feeble petitions. Once more adieu.

"Dear sir, your very much obliged and faithful friend and brother, T. COKE.

"*The Rev. Dr. Maclaine, Hague.*"

The letter thus addressed to Dr. Maclaine was equally as ineffectual as the memorial that had been presented to the governors of Holland, and as Dr. Coke's interview with the stadtholder. Nothing could induce them to alter their purposes respecting their slaves in the West India islands. The door therefore continued to be shut against the Methodist missionaries from this time till the year 1804, when divine Providence, without any application to earthly power, seems to have prepared the way for its reopening. A gentleman of high respectability in St. Eustatius, having noticed the beneficial effects that had resulted from these missions

in other islands, laid before the governor in 1804 such a clear statement as induced him to depart from the intolerant principles and practices of his predecessors. This liberty being obtained, the same gentleman invited our missionaries thither, offering his house for their accommodation. The offer thus made was readily embraced. A chapel was afterward built, and a Sunday school established. Dr. Coke therefore lived to see the ardent wishes of his heart crowned with ultimate success, and to behold the name of St. Eustatius enrolled in the list of those islands in which God has enabled us to erect the standard of the cross.

Dr. Coke, on his return from Holland, confined himself chiefly, during the remaining part of the year 1794, to the labours which his commentary, travelling from place to place, preaching, and begging for the missions, constantly occasioned. In soliciting subscriptions for the support of the gospel among the slaves in the West Indies he was particularly successful. His address was almost sure to command attention, and his solicitude was too importunate to be long withstood. His name was well known throughout the kingdom; and his business was so far his constant companion, that few, unless they were strangers, were ignorant of his errand wherever he appeared. This combination of circumstances almost ensured his collections, and frequently procured for him liberal donations, where few beside himself would have hoped for any thing but insult and contempt.

Animated with the hopes of seeing the kingdom of Jesus extending over the heathen world, he turned his attention, in the year 1795, to the inhabitants of Africa; and, in conjunction with others, meditated a plan of sending into the Foulah country some pious mechanics, who might at once instruct the natives in domestic arts, inculcate piety by their example, and occasionally preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Foulah country, which lies somewhat in the interior, had been represented to him as inhabited by a harmless race of men, who had in no small degree thrown off the barbarous customs of savage life, and made some efforts toward civilization. Humane in

their dispositions, and docile in their manners, it was thought that they presented to England an inviting prospect, on which her benevolence toward the degraded nations of this continent might be exercised with peculiar advantage. It was considered as the dawn of approaching light, that would, if properly improved, diffuse itself over this vast and almost unknown part of the globe.

Charmed with these views, and urged by his love of souls, particularly those of the heathen, Dr. Coke communicated his intentions to an eminent statesman, whose name may be omitted when the welfare of the Africans and the abolition of the slave trade are mentioned. This statesman, whose honours will remain unsullied when the fame of heroes shall become extinct, having made himself acquainted with the condition of the natives, was so far satisfied with the measure in contemplation, that, in reply to the communication, he transmitted to Dr. Coke the following letter:—

"Sir,—I cannot help taking up my pen for a moment to assure you of the satisfaction it affords me to hear of your intention to plant a mission in the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone. I shall certainly, among my brother directors, recommend and enforce our duty, and the utility of forwarding the measure in the best way we are able, with propriety, in our official situations; and I dare say we could procure a large subscription toward the support of the mission in our individual capacities. I pray that it may please God to bring this scheme into accomplishment, and that he may bless your labours with success. It can hardly, however, be expedient for you to go to Africa so soon as you mention, as you would in that case arrive during what is called the smokes; it will be better therefore for you to wait till November or December. I cannot help adding that much must depend upon the qualifications and dispositions of the missionaries, not only for their success among the natives, (according to the usual proceedings of divine Providence,) but also for the friends we might be able to raise for the general purposes of the establishment."

It will hardly be denied that Great Britain has many

national vices; but it cannot be doubted that she has also many national virtues. Among these, is that spirit of benevolence which is always ready to promote any beneficial institution. Dr. Coke, having consulted his friends, made his appeal to this national characteristic, and found himself supported with liberal donations, that were worthy of the humane design, and entitled to a better fate than the result afforded.

Travelling through the country, he endeavoured also to find out suitable persons to engage in this arduous employment. After preaching, he generally introduced the subject to his congregations; and, on stating the affair, requested, if any persons, answering the description he had given, felt disposed to go, that such persons, on the ensuing day, would call on him, that they might have some conversation on the subject. Young men, fond of adventure, were not backward to become candidates for the enterprise; but, on minute examination, it was not easy to find that happy union of ability and character, which was indispensably necessary for the task. At length, after much inquiry, some married men were found, who were willing to engage in this hazardous employment, apparently from a conviction of duty, and an earnest wish to promote the general welfare of the human race.

On making the necessary inquiries into their characters, of those to whom they were well known, recommendations were strongly in their favour; and with five or six sober, industrious, and respectable tradesmen an engagement was speedily formed. As these were about to repair to a foreign land, in which neither tools nor clothing could be procured, it became necessary that an ample supply of these articles should be provided, prior to their departure from England. In the meanwhile, as the men relinquished their employment some time before they were prepared for their voyage, it also became necessary that they should have some support. All these circumstances, united together, created a considerable expense before they could get on board a ship that was to take them to some port near the place of their destination.

The necessary arrangements being made, the pack-

ages were carried to Plymouth, in the vicinity of which town most of the articles had been made. In this neighbourhood some of the adventurers also resided; and from this port they were expected to sail in December, 1795. But some unforeseen circumstances preventing the ship from touching at Plymouth, they all repaired to Portsmouth in the month of January, 1796.

Being furnished with every thing necessary for their voyage, and the ship being ready for sea, the adventurers, with their families, repaired on board, about the middle of February, in health, in high spirits, and in a state of perfect harmony with one another. The vessel, on board of which they were about to sail, was bound for Sierra Leone. The governor of the colony was with them; and being acquainted with their designs, he became interested in their welfare, promising them every assistance in his power, both during their voyage and after their arrival. The captain and ship's company were more amiable than might have been expected, so that nothing was wanting to complete their accommodations but some additional room, and this the ship could not possibly afford. As this was an inconvenience which had been anticipated, Dr. Coke, constantly attentive to their comforts, had repaired to the directors, to solicit that some part of the cargo might be taken out; but the orders for sailing having been issued prior to his application, nothing of this kind could possibly be done.

To remedy this, the governor recommended that two of the families should go on shore, and remain until another ship sailed for the colony. To this he added that those who embarked with him would find every accommodation in Sierra Leone, and full employment, until those who should remain behind could arrive:—that, during this interim, they would have a seasoning in the colony, in which they might procure medical assistance, such as could not be obtained in the Foulah country. By these means they would be better prepared to pursue their journey on the arrival of the others, which would probably be at the most convenient season of the year for their settling.

Our adventurers heard these recommendations of the

governor, without discovering any inclination to accede to his proposition; and, after consulting together, they finally resolved rather to submit to the inconveniences which they perceived they must inevitably experience, than suffer a separation. The governor, being made acquainted with their resolution submitted to their decision, and after renewing his promise of rendering them all the service in his power, their friends at Portsmouth, who had accompanied them on board, recommending them by earnest prayer to the protection and blessing of Heaven, took an affectionate leave, and went on shore. On the same day the vessel dropped down to St. Helen's, and on the 23d of February, 1796, joining Admiral Gardener's convoy, sailed for the African shores.

During the whole of these transactions and preparations, no impropriety whatever was discovered in the behaviour of the adventurers, that could indicate in the least degree the unhappy result which finally defeated the undertaking. Some little confusion appeared on board, through the sea-sickness which they experienced while in the harbour; but this was nothing more than the natural consequence of their situation. In other respects their conduct was irreproachable, and their language appeared to express the warm effusions of a grateful heart. "When I consider," says a preacher who was at this time stationed at Portsmouth, "the real religion, and good disposition of all in authority on board, I cannot doubt of their being well used. And when I consider the good spirit of our friends, I must believe that God will be with them."

It is a principle which must probably be for ever inseparable from a probationary state, that, "He that can choose can err." It was the misfortune of Dr. Coke and his friends to do both on the present occasion; and their unhappiness to suffer severely from the effects of their involuntary indiscretion.

The ship, after a pleasant voyage, reached the colony of Sierra Leone in safety, and landed the new adventurers in a state of perfect health. They had not, however, been long in this colony, before those dispositions which they had artfully concealed while in England, but which had appeared on the voyage, became too conspi-

cuous to be unobserved. One alone seems to have been actuated by a proper principle. This man held fast his integrity; and to his account we are indebted for our knowledge of their conduct. His letter is dated the 18th of April, 1796.

"I am sorry," he observes, "to say, that most of the persons you chose for the propagation of the gospel in the Foulah country, in Africa, have manifested to the world that they are strangers to the power of it themselves. I thought that their discontent while on board might have arisen from their being strangers to ships, but I soon found that it arose from an unrenewed heart. I laboured all I could to conceal their conduct from the other passengers and sailors, but in vain. The women were frequently quarrelling with each other, and Mr. P—— and Mr. E—— were generally calling each other ill names. I was truly weighed down beyond measure, as I plainly saw that our design and that of the subscribers would be frustrated."

Nor was their behaviour in the colony less reprehensible than their conduct while they were on board. Their general deportment, which was better calculated to excite contempt than to command respect, exposed them to the derision of all who noticed their manners, without feeling an interest in the settlement they were appointed to establish; and procured the pity of such as were disposed to favour their cause. Happily the dissensions which prevailed among them, prevented the evil from being carried into the country they intended to visit; so that if the natives of the Foulah country were not to be enlightened by the gospel at this time, neither were they to be corrupted by their example, nor disgusted with their manners.

Prior to the time of their departure from Sierra Leone, some of the women declared that they would proceed no farther, and reflected on their husbands for thus conducting them into a foreign climate. Having taken this resolution, their husbands, after wavering in uncertainty for a season, joined them in this fortunate revolt; the whole system, therefore, became deranged, and the expedition was abandoned altogether. The unworthy adventurers seized the earliest opportunity of returning

once more to their native land, to accuse each other with having defeated the undertaking, and to endure that shame and reproach which they had procured for themselves by their own misconduct. Thus ended an undertaking which had been carried on at a vast expense, and prosecuted by the directors from the best of motives, to introduce the gospel, and to spread the domestic arts among the savage nations of Africa.

The settlement having failed through the causes which have been mentioned, without even giving the inhabitants of the Foulah country any trial, Dr. Coke was not satisfied to abandon the enterprise for ever. In the ensuing year, he again opened some communications with a gentleman who was well acquainted with the nature of the undertaking. But finding from him that in the interim some arrangements had been made in Scotland for sending, from a society established there, some missionaries into the same territories, and having more promising openings in other parts of the globe, he forbore to press it with ardour. The consequence was, that it was finally relinquished, to be resumed by him no more.

The narrative of this unsuccessful effort will certainly afford room for much useful reflection. How far it might have been proper on the present occasion, or any other, for the Methodists, whose sole business is to preach the gospel, to form any alliance with those arts which evidently belong to the department of civilization, may well admit of some serious doubts. This was the only effort of the kind that they ever made; and in this they were totally defeated, through the very means by which they undertook to accomplish their purposes. That their motives in the undertaking were pure, no doubt can be entertained; but purity of motive is not always a sure criterion to direct us in the paths of duty. If this effort had been successful, the consequences to which it might have led baffle all our calculations. It might have opened a way through which, in process of time, our foreign missionaries might have degenerated into a company of traders;—through which an alliance might have been formed with commercial policy;—and through which the spirit of the world might have diffused

its temporising influence over that pure simplicity which distinguishes the principles of the gospel. The Almighty, in infinite goodness, to prevent these awful consequences, may have permitted this scheme to be defeated, by means which developed in miniature the evils which success would have rendered portentous to the whole body. It is His prerogative to bring good out of evil. The failure of this scheme might therefore have been necessary to prevent another from being undertaken on similar grounds; and, under an overruling Providence, it may have been a powerful instrument to preserve the connection from future contamination.

But there is another lesson which this little history more evidently inculcates; and that is, the care that should always be taken in selecting men to fill up every missionary station. The precepts of this lesson are of universal application. To Dr. Coke no particular blame can be attached on the present occasion, since it is scarcely possible to conceive that he could know any thing of the persons sent, until they were recommended to him; and after that time, until they sailed, they furnished no room for any just suspicions. In behalf of the persons by whom they were recommended, it may be charitably hoped that they also were deceived: but even this is but a slender compensation for the tendency which unworthy characters have, to dry up the sources of benevolence, and to check the diffusion of active virtue.

Of the admonitions which the letter above inserted contains, we should never lose sight. In every respect much depends upon the character of the missionaries who are sent; and none but men of tried integrity and piety are worthy of that confidence which every missionary should inspire. Removed from that restraint which the eyes of his superiors and associates always impose, the man who ventures into a foreign climate, where temptations become more numerous, and their influence more powerful, while his means of resistance grow weaker and less, falls a victim to evils which his soul primarily abhorred. Nothing but a principle of divine grace, kept continually in exercise, can enable him to stand; and even this should be matured before

he leaves the fostering society of his friends. The vices of one, should he unhappily fall while abroad, will be productive of evils for which the virtues of five can hardly make an adequate compensation. But we have levied a tax on our past indiscretion, and have recovered, through that superior care which we have since exercised, more patronage and more reputation than we have lost by our ineffectual attempts to establish a settlement in the Foulah country.

CHAPTER XIV.

Dr. Coke sails again for America—Treated with brutality by the captain—Account of a wreck found at sea—State of religion on the continent—Entertains serious thoughts of settling in America—Returns to Glasgow—Instance of superstition—State of religion in Scotland—Embarks for Ireland—Finds religion in a prosperous state there—Difficulty of taking a final leave of his Irish friends—English conference use means to prevent his settling in America—Sails again for the continent in 1797—Captured by a French privateer—Mr. Asbury's letter relative to Dr. Coke's return—Returns to England—Projects and procures the establishment of missions among the Irish—Proposes an union of the Methodists with the Church of England—Letter to the bishop of London—Bishop's reply—Scheme proves abortive—Protection procured by Dr. Coke for the Methodists during the Irish rebellion—Instances of loyalty among the Methodists in Ireland during this commotion, and among the Methodist negroes in the West Indies, in seasons of danger—Approbation of government—Persecuting law in Jersey—Dr. Coke procures its repeal—Embarks again for America—Request of the English conference for his return to Europe—Reply—Persecution in Bermuda—Dr. Coke prevents the law from receiving the royal sanction—Mr. Collet's confessions respecting Mr. Wesley.

It is a true observation, that "one misfortune seldom comes alone;" and it was Dr. Coke's misfortune to witness, about this time, the truth of this proverbial expression.

With a heart bleeding at every pore, in consequence of the miscarriage of the Foulah mission in 1796, he embarked, on the 6th of August in the same year, on board of the Friendship, at Gravesend, near London,

bound for Baltimore. The company in the cabin were, the captain and his mate, the captain of a vessel that had been wrecked, Mr. Pontivice, who accompanied Dr. Coke to instruct him in the French language, another passenger, and himself.

Dr. Coke and Mr. Pontivice had not been long on board, before they discovered that they had fallen into company of the most abandoned kind. They had paid eighty guineas for their passage, but their accommodations and provisions were of the meanest description, and their stock was too scanty for a nine weeks' voyage, to which, through calms and contrary winds, their miserable passage was lengthened out. On reaching the port of her destination, the ship had only provisions for two days more on board. But these were little more than the common inconveniences attendant on voyages across the Atlantic.

Independently of these, the two captains appeared to rival each other in their attempts at brutality, and in the direct insults which their passengers were compelled to bear from them. "To give a minute account," says Dr. Coke, "of the ill usage I received, would, I think, be sufficient to fill a volume. The obscenity and blasphemy of the two captains, with the various means they employed to make my passage painful, are not easily to be described. The treatment I received brought on a fit of illness, which confined me to my bed for three days."

To mark the general tenor of their conduct, Dr. Coke, in his private papers, has descended to particulars; and the picture which he has drawn of their behaviour makes them not only a dishonour to the English name, but a disgrace to human nature. These private papers, which are now before the writer, it was his intention at first to exhibit to the world, that the captains, if still alive, might blush to behold their conduct, even though their names were concealed. But on a second review of these papers, as he found that it was scarcely possible to communicate the ideas which they contain, without offending the eyes and the ears of delicacy, he finally determined to consign them to oblivion. With Dr. Coke the same reasons prevailed. He had made his

memoranda with a resolution to prosecute the authors of his wrongs, on his arrival at Baltimore; and many of his friends in that city urged him to make his appeal to justice and to law, to drag their enormities to light, not merely on his own account, but in behalf of the community at large. But he was deterred from his purpose by the indelicacy of the scenes which he would have been compelled to unravel in an open court. Mean, vulgar, and obscene, both in their manners and their language, they have hitherto been protected from public execration, and the punishment they deserved, through the mere excess of their brutality. And the forgiveness of him who suffered from their wanton inhumanity, shall be so far cherished by his biographer, that their names shall not be transmitted to posterity through these pages.

But severe and painful as Dr. Coke's sufferings were, they were less acute than the calamities which others were doomed to endure, and which he was called to witness during this voyage. "About six weeks," says Dr. Coke, "after we sailed, on a Sunday morning, when the sea was perfectly calm, we saw a wreck. It proved to be a ship bound to London, from Honduras bay, in the gulf of Mexico. About five or six days before, in a storm, the skirts of which had reached us, it was overset, and the sailors were obliged to cut down all the masts, to restore it to its proper position. It was loaded with mahogany and logwood, the specific gravity of which, on the whole, being lighter than water, it was prevented from sinking. The ship's company consisted of the captain, the mate, four white sailors, three negroes, an Indian, one woman, and a boy.

"The masts being cut down, the ship soon filled with water. Before this they had brought up all their provisions, and placed them on the most secure part of the deck; but the wind rising higher, a few tremendous waves washed off the whole, and the poor woman also. She was the wife of one of the sailors, I believe of the mate, had been in Honduras bay upward of twenty years, and had now embarked for London, to make one visit to her English friends before she died. The abundance of fish which was swimming around the

wreck, and apparently waiting for their prey, was astonishing.

"The poor men had remained five days and five nights in this dismal situation, without the least food or drink of any kind, except some bits of leather which they cut off from the cover of the cabin skylight, and sea water, of which some drank abundantly, contrary to the entreaty of the captain. The captain of our ship, bad as he was, had compassion enough to take them on board. Their looks were exceedingly affecting. Their eagerness for water was extreme; and it was with difficulty they were persuaded to suck or swallow down a little biscuit before they drank. The captain only was an exception. He behaved like a hero, his face was serenity itself; nor could any one have imagined by his countenance that he had suffered any hardship. He walked down to the cabin, and waited, without the least word expressive of uneasiness, till some beef and bread were set before him, and he ate several bits before he attempted to drink. One of the negroes, I found, was a child of God, a preacher, and a leader of a class. He had done considerable good in Honduras bay; and at one time had a good congregation; but, as he humbly confessed himself, his hearers in general left him, on account of the deficiency of his talents for preaching continually to the same congregation.

"Our captain tied the wreck to his ship, and got from it cannon, cordage, sails, blocks, &c., which I believe were worth 200*l*. But late in the evening, while he was returning with a cannon, which was tied to the side of his boat, the wind suddenly sprang up, the cord broke which fastened our ship to the wreck, and with the utmost difficulty he was saved."*

On the 3d of October, they saw with joy the American land opening before them, but it was not until several days more had elapsed that they were permitted to set their feet on the shore. Delivered at length from his floating dungeon, Dr. Coke hastened to Baltimore from the mouth of the Chesapeake, where he first landed, finding in every stage of his journey such hospitality

* Sixth voyage to America, published in the Methodist Magazine, for 1798, p. 315.

and civility as he had not been permitted to experience during the nine tedious weeks of his voyage.

Dr. Coke continued on the continent from the 3d of October, 1796, until the 6th of February, 1797, on which day he embarked at Charleston, on board of an American ship bound for Glasgow, in Scotland, During his tour through the United States at this time, he attended several conferences; conversed much with his old associates in the ministry, and had an opportunity of learning the state of religion on the continent. From persecution the friends of Jesus had nothing to apprehend; but much uneasiness had been occasioned in various parts, through a division that had taken place in the church. This had produced an unhappy ferment, and many had suffered much loss in their souls. The effects of these dissensions were still felt; so that on the whole he expressed his doubts whether vital religion had made any real progress, from the time of his former visit to the present period. In most places, however, the congregations were large and deeply attentive; and they seemed to promise, when the present ferment had subsided, that those who remained, being of one heart and of one mind, would behold more auspicious days.

Prior to Dr. Coke's leaving England, the failure of the Foulah undertaking, of which the narrative has been given in the preceding chapter, the management of which had devolved on him, rendered his last attendance at the English conference far from being pleasing. These circumstances, connected with a hope of being more extensively useful in America than he could be in England, rendered it somewhat doubtful on his departure, whether he should not take up his final abode with his friends on the continent. To a proposition of this kind, made to the general conference in America on his arrival, that body most gladly acceded. Dr. Coke, therefore, laid himself under a most solemn promise to return to the continent, after having revisited England, and settled his affairs on this side of the Atlantic; unless in compliance with any particular request that might be made, they should voluntarily consent for him to remain in Europe. But as his future residence in the United States rested wholly with themselves, suspended only

on a condition with which they had no intention to comply, they considered him as incorporated in their community, and on his departure, they anticipated the season of his final return.

The ship on board of which he embarked at Charleston, on the 6th of February, 1797, was driven by a favourable tempest across the Atlantic, and brought into the mouth of the Irish channel in twenty-five days. But the violence of the waves had carried away the bulwarks on both sides of the vessel, so that he durst not make his appearance on deck during this tempestuous voyage. To this continued storm a calm succeeded, which detained them in the same spot nearly sixteen days, during fourteen of which they saw no vessel of any description. This continued calm the captain attributed to Dr. Coke's reading a folio volume which he had on board. In the early stages of the calm he would sometimes hint his wishes that the book were finished. At length, being impelled more violently by a tide of superstition than his vessel was by the natural breezes, he exclaimed in unequivocal terms, "We shall never have a wind until that book is finished." "Sir, I will put it aside," replied Dr. Coke. "No," rejoined the captain, "that will not do; it must be finished, or we shall have no wind." Dr. Coke continued reading, and "I doubt not," he observes, "that the captain was somewhat confirmed in his opinion; for just as I had finished the book, the wind sprang up, and in six and thirty hours brought us into harbour."

On surveying the state of religion in Scotland, Dr. Coke considered it as having awfully degenerated from its primitive purity, when the candle of the Lord shone throughout the Scottish churches; and a melancholy declension in experimental and practical godliness had taken place. His present visit, therefore, confirmed him in an opinion which he had expressed in a letter to Mr. Wesley in 1785, that a formal separation from the Church of Scotland was essentially necessary to the welfare of Methodism in that kingdom. The remedy which he then proposed was, that a given number of preachers should be ordained to labour in that kingdom, who might administer the sacraments, and perform all

the rites of religion; and thus prevent the people from holding any communion with improper teachers. To the principles of this plan he still adhered; and the progress of religion in America, which had no connection with an establishment by law, appeared as an additional circumstance to give sanction to the measure.

On the 29th of March Dr. Coke sailed to Ireland, and travelled through many parts of that country, preaching to large congregations, and in most places beholding, in the diffusion of the gospel, the wonderful work of God. Throughout the various circuits, the mobs, which were no longer sanctioned by men in power, only, in particular instances, were a feeble annoyance, which was scarcely sufficient to disturb the general tranquillity; the numbers in society were regularly increasing; and, in many hearts, grace was evidently reigning through righteousness unto eternal life.

Keeping in view, through all these visits, his engagements to return to America, where he intended to take up his final abode, he frequently spoke to his congregations in a manner that strongly indicated it was the last time they would ever hear his voice. His farewell admonitions had a powerful effect upon his audiences. Several among them burst into tears; and many sorrowed for the words which he spake, that they would see his face no more. At the conference which succeeded to these excursive visits he found himself more firmly riveted in the affections of the preachers, as well as of the people, than he could easily have imagined. And, as a natural consequence, he discovered that it was less difficult to form a plan of separation, when he was five thousand miles distant, than to carry that plan into execution when he came to take leave of his Irish friends.

At the English conference, which speedily followed, the preachers who assembled intimated one to another the prevailing report, that Dr. Coke intended quitting them for ever, and taking up his abode for life in the United States of America. This was an event which they were no more disposed to relish than they had been previously prepared to expect. The thought, therefore, of being forsaken by a man who had been

more active about the missions than any one besides in the connection, and who had been the chief pillar on which the burden of this department rested, awakened all their sympathy and affections; and he was requested by words and actions rather to relinquish his intention to quit the country than to abandon them.

Subdued by these affectionate importunities, the propriety of adhering to his promise of returning to America, without making some effort to get it annulled, through that condition which had been introduced, appeared now in a dubious light. He was again brought into a dilemma, but it was of the pleasing kind. He was importuned on each side of the Atlantic. He was unwilling to displease either party; but to comply with the wishes of both, under existing circumstances, was rendered impossible.

Having laid himself under an engagement in America, which was too sacred to be violated, but from the fulfilment of which he had no objections to recede, provided his promise could be repealed with honour, he once more turned his face toward the continent, and began to prepare for his seventh voyage across the western ocean. In addition to the common concerns of his ordinary visits, he was now appointed to negotiate between the conference of England and that of America, for the place of his future and final abode. Thus balanced between the affectionate solicitations of both, his attachments became divided; and the natural result enabled him on the present occasion to remain nearly in a state of passive indecision, to learn from the issue of combined events what might appear to be the order of Providence, by which he was determind to abide.

The affairs of conference being ended, and an address prepared for the brethren in America, requesting them to cancel Dr. Coke's engagements to continue among them, that he might return and take up his final residence, he took his leave, and shortly afterward departed on his voyage. Procuring a passage at Liverpool, he sailed from that port on the 28th of August, 1797, on board of an American ship, called the President, commanded by John Addison Smith, a native of the conti-

nent. The winds on their departure proving rather unfavourable, five days elapsed before they had cleared the channel, and even then their condition was too disastrous to permit them to proceed. The ship having sprung a leak, which admitted a vast quantity of water, the seamen were obliged to work continually at the pumps. But being near the coast of Ireland, they directed their course toward its shores, and cast anchor near Londonderry, in order to have it examined and repaired. On the 4th of September they again put to sea, but found themselves exposed to tempestuous weather for nearly five weeks. On the 18th, Dr. Coke was much alarmed by being awakened in the dead of night with the sound of water descending with violence over the cabin stairs. His conclusion was, that the ship was sinking, and that within a few moments the souls of all on board would be launched into eternity. The alarm was quickly allayed ; and all the passengers were tranquil as soon as it was discovered that it proceeded from a solitary wave which had covered the deck and found its way into every avenue. On the 20th, several enormous whales played around the ship ; and on the 3d of October, they spoke with a Danish vessel that had been boarded by a French privateer, from which she was separated by contrary winds. On the 27th they fell in with another ship, which became their companion for many leagues, and frequently sailed so near them that the people on board each vessel were able to converse, and mutually relate the particulars of their respective voyages. From their companion they learned that she also had been boarded by a privateer ; but that, having nothing but salt on board, she was suffered to proceed on her voyage. Reports of this kind could not but awaken their apprehensions of danger ; and it was not long after their companion parted from them, before they had an opportunity of discovering that their fears were not altogether imaginary.

On Sunday, the 29th of October, about half past three in the afternoon, two brigs appeared in sight. One of these, as they afterward discovered, was from the United States, and bound for Guadaloupe, toward which she continued to bend her course. The other brig, on dis-

covering the vessel in which Dr. Coke sailed, altered her direction, and with crowded sail made instantly toward her. The Liverpool ship being heavily laden with salt, and being without arms, was totally unable either to escape or to resist, in case the brig approaching her should prove an enemy. The stranger carrying English colours induced some to hope that she was a friend; but the captain from the first moment she appeared in sight was of a different opinion. About five o'clock her port-holes were visible to the naked eye, and scarcely any doubt was now entertained of her being a French privateer. Almost immediately afterward a gun was fired for them to slacken sail; and as escape and resistance were alike impossible, the captain instantly obeyed.

The armed brig, still under English colours, now ran alongside, when a person from her deck, addressing the people on board the Liverpool ship in perfectly good English, after a few questions, commanded the captain to send his boat immediately on board. It was now nearly sunset, and the silent gloom which sat on every countenance during the absence of the boat gave to suspense an additional solemnity. This suspense was of no long duration. Within about half an hour, the boat returned full of Frenchmen, who declared the ship to be a prize; and ordered all the English, except the captain, the black cook, the cabin boy, and the passengers, on board of the privateer, for such this brig was now discovered to be.

To relieve the passengers from that terror which their being captured had naturally occasioned, one of the Frenchmen approached, and informed them that their fears were groundless, as no private property on board should be touched; the French captain having declared that whoever purloined a single article should forfeit his share of the prize money. Being somewhat consoled with this declaration, they went down into the cabin, and drank their tea with more comfort than could otherwise have been expected, the prize master and his mate having joined their company.

The orders, however, which are issued on board of a privateer when a prize is taken are rarely enforced with

rigour, or obeyed with punctuality. The truth of this was painfully experienced by Dr. Coke and his companions in adversity. The sailors in the first place demanded rum; but on finding that there was scarcely any on board, and that they could obtain nothing but porter, and this only in small quantities, they became insolent from disappointment, and proceeded to outrages which nothing but intoxication might have been expected to occasion.

The captain of the President, whose solicitude for the welfare of the passengers never forsook him, soon found, on calm reflection, that he was a ruined man. In this ship a considerable portion of his property was embarked, and the derangement that its capture would occasion in his affairs on the continent required his immediate presence. But his destiny could not be reversed, and he submitted to his condition with a degree of fortitude which heroic minds can alone display. If the ship had been laden only with salt, she would not have been a lawful prize. But between her decks there was a considerable quantity of bale goods, which had been taken in at an English port, and this was sufficient for her condemnation by the existing laws of France.

The head of the President was now turned toward the West Indies; and, accompanied by the privateer, it was expected she would be conducted to Porto Rico, as the admiralty of that port condemned almost every vessel that was brought in; and it was highly probable that the Spanish governor had a share in the privateer. Dr. Coke, in ruminating on his condition, as his missionary views were ever uppermost, was at first induced to think that God had more work for him to accomplish in the islands. But a little reflection on the moral impossibility of getting into any of the British colonies, gave a new direction to his thoughts, and led him to hope and pray that he might still be enabled to reach the shores of the continent.

His prayers and wishes did not long remain unanswered. A Methodist preacher is perhaps one of the worst prizes that a privateer can take. The sailors can soon make themselves acquainted with the value of his baggage; but of him they know not the worth. It was

in this scale of estimation that Dr. Coke and his property were weighed. And, therefore, after plundering him of his clothes, but restoring to him his books and papers, they contrived means to set him on shore to pursue his way, and make his friends acquainted with the disaster of his voyage.

In travelling through the continent, after thus getting almost naked on shore, he soon found friends who cheerfully supplied his wants; so that he was enabled to pursue his course in nearly the same manner that distinguished his former tour. Of this journey, therefore, it will be wholly unnecessary to give any farther description. But of the effect which the address produced, that had been transmitted from the English conference, some notice must be taken, as it clearly proves the exalted opinion which the American preachers entertained of his usefulness, and of the rank which he bore in their public estimation. Nothing can set these facts in a more convincing light than the following official letter, addressed to the members of the British conference. This letter is dated Virginia conference, November 29, 1797.

"Respected Fathers and Brethren,—You, in your brotherly kindness, were pleased to address a letter to us, your brethren and friends in America, expressing your difficulties and desires concerning our beloved brother Dr. Coke, that he might return to Europe to heal the breach which designing men have been making among you, or prevent its threatened overflow. We have but one grand responsive body, which is our general conference, and it was in and to this body the doctor entered his obligations to serve his brethren in America. No yearly conference, no official character dare assume to answer for that grand federal body.

"By the advice of the yearly conference now sitting in Virginia, and the respect I bear to you, I write to inform you that in our own persons and order we consent to his return, and *partial* continuance with you, and earnestly pray that you may have much peace, union, and happiness together. May you find that your divisions end in a greater union, order, and harmony of the body, so that the threatened cloud may blow over, and

your divisive party may be of as little consequence to you, as ours is to us.

"With respect to the doctor's returning to us, I leave your enlarged understandings and good sense to judge. You will see the number of souls upon our annual Minutes, and as men of reading, you may judge over what a vast continent these societies are scattered. I refer you to a large letter I wrote our beloved brother Bradburn on the subject.

"By a probable guess, we have, perhaps, from 1,000 to 1,200 travelling and local preachers. Local preachers are daily rising up and coming forward with proper recommendations from their respective societies, to receive ordination, beside the regulation and ordinations of the yearly conferences. From Charleston, South Carolina, where the conference was held, to the province of Maine, where another conference is to be held, there is a space of about 1,300 miles; and we have only one worn-out superintendent, who was this day advised by the yearly conference to desist from preaching till next spring, on account of his debilitated state of body. But the situation of our affairs requires that he should travel about 5,000 miles a year, through many parts unsettled, and other thinly peopled countries. I have now with me an assistant, who does every thing for me he constitutionally can: but the ordaining and stationing the preachers can only be performed by myself in the doctor's absence.

"We have to lament that our superintendency is so weak, and that it cannot constitutionally be strengthened till the ensuing general conference. How I have felt and must feel, under such critical and important circumstances, I leave you to judge.

"To write much on the subject would be imposing on my own weakness and your good understanding. I speak as unto wise men; judge what I say.

"Wishing you great peace and spiritual prosperity, I remain your brother, your friend, your servant for Christ's sake, FRANCIS ASBURY."

Dr. Coke continued on the continent till some time in the spring of 1798. During this period he found a sufficiency of employment, while assisting Mr. Asbury

in those branches of his duty to which none beside themselves were deemed competent. And on his final departure from America, although the conference at Virginia, as appears by the preceding letter, had given him leave to retire for a season, it was from a full conviction that, by the general conference, he would be recalled, and bound by that engagement which he had previously made.

The general conference, after viewing, with due deliberation, the peculiar ground on which he stood, and weighing the solicitation which the English conference had made for his return, instead of enforcing those claims which his promise had enabled them to urge, manifested a willingness to follow the example which the preceding letter had set before them. They were willing to suspend their demands, but not to renounce their rights. The utmost, therefore, to which they would submit was, that Dr. Coke should remain in England, and act under the direction of the British conference, so long as his presence in America was not essentially necessary. But in case they thought it needful to call him to the continent, his promise was still to be considered as obligatory, and he was to obey the summons. Such was the final determination of the general conference, and in this state of uncancelled suspension his promise remained until his eyes were closed in death.

On his return from America, in 1798, Dr. Coke employed his time chiefly in visiting the societies, in begging for the missions, and in carrying on his great work, the commentary. But it was not to the missions already established that his gospel views were exclusively confined. His desire to extend the gospel scarcely knew any bounds; so that even while he was combating innumerable difficulties to rescue those in the West Indies from their returning embarrassments, he was constantly exerting himself in establishing more.

During this year, he formed a plan for introducing the gospel among the degraded peasantry of Ireland, by means of missionaries, who should travel through their unfrequented districts, and address them in their native tongue. At first his proposition was deemed

impracticable, and few only were disposed to support his views. But he had been too much accustomed to opposition, to abandon any plan which he thought would be for the benefit of mankind, merely because it had not the happiness of meeting with immediate approbation. Persevering, therefore, in his measures, his exertions were at last crowned with success, and a mission among the Irish peasantry was established. The events which followed have more than justified the experiment. From that time to the present, this mission has continued to flourish; and the numbers of souls that have been converted, furnish a decisive evidence that it has been owned of God. Of this mission, the numerous letters which have been published in the Methodist Magazine, during the last seven years, will furnish a detailed account.

But it was not merely to the increase of missions in the more benighted parts that Dr. Coke's views were at this time confined. Attached, like Mr. Wesley, to the Establishment of his country, and unwilling to countenance innovations that might ultimately lead the Methodists to form themselves into a separate body, he devised a plan, which, he thought, might wholly prevent the evil which he feared. The principles of this plan were, to establish, if possible, an indissoluble union between the Methodists and the Church of England, without rendering them dependent upon the clergy of the Establishment. That he had in former years defended measures which innovations had introduced, is a point of which some notice has been already taken. But these variations imply no inconsistency of character. The changes which had resulted from innovation he highly approved; but the principle from whence they came by no means met his approbation. It was therefore with a view to secure the effect, while he discarded the former cause, and introduced another that should be more legitimately adequate to all the advantages which had been experienced or were now desired, that his present plan was formed, and submitted to the inspection of the highest ecclesiastical authority in the nation. Of this plan we shall insert the outline, so far as may be necessary to the developement of its principles, as it

stands in a copy of a letter which he wrote to the bishop of London.*

"May it please your lordship,—I have felt a strong inclination for more than twelve months past, to take the liberty of writing to your lordship on a subject which appears to me of vast importance; I mean the necessity of securing the great body of Methodists in connection with the late Rev. John Wesley to the Church of England.

"The Methodist society, in England only, consists of between eighty and ninety thousand adults in close connection. Our regular hearers amount, I believe, to full six times as many upon the average, inclusive of the societies; so that the regular hearers make up half a million. They are friends of the liturgy of the Church of England, and of its episcopacy. But there is one thing which I greatly dread, and which I am afraid, if not prevented, will in the course of years have a very fatal tendency.

"A very considerable part of our society have imbibed a deep prejudice against receiving the Lord's supper from the hands of immoral clergymen. The word immoral they consider in a very extensive sense, as including all those who frequent card tables, balls, horse-racing, theatres, and other places of fashionable amusement. I have found it in vain to urge to them that the validity of the ordinance does not depend upon the piety or even the morality of the minister: all my arguments have had no effect. In consequence of this, petitions were sent, immediately after the death of Mr. Wesley, from different societies, to our annual conference, requesting that they might receive the Lord's supper from their own preachers, or from such as conference might appoint to administer it to them. For two years this point was combated with success; but some of our leading friends conceiving that a few exempt cases might be allowed, opposition to the measure was overruled. These exempt cases, as had been fore-

* It may perhaps be necessary to state that this correspondence with the bishop of London was purely of a personal nature as it respects Dr. Coke, the conference knowing nothing of it at the time, and having no connection whatever with the business.

seen, annually increased; so that now a considerable number of our body have deviated in this instance from the Established Church; and I plainly perceive that this deviation, unless prevented, will in time bring about a universal separation from the Establishment.

"But how can this be prevented? I am inclined to think that if a given number of our leading preachers, proposed by our general conference, were to be ordained, and permitted to travel through our connection to administer the sacraments to those societies who have been thus prejudiced as above, every difficulty would be removed. I have no doubt that the people would be universally satisfied. The men of greatest influence in the connection would, I am sure, unite with me; and every deviation from the Church of England would be done away.

"In a letter which a few months past I took the liberty of writing to your lordship, on the business of our societies in Jersey, I observed that for a little time I had been warped from my attachment to the Church of England, in consequence of my visiting the states of America; but, like a bow too much bent, I have again returned. But I return with a full conviction that our numerous societies in America would have been a regular presbyterian church, if Mr. Wesley and myself had not taken the steps which we judged it necessary to adopt.

"Perhaps, my lord, I may urge, for the importance of the present proposition, that the promotion of union among Christians was never so necessary as in the present age, when infidelity moves with such gigantic strides. However its numerous votaries may disagree in their philosophical tenets, they cordially unite to oppose Christianity. It is only between the Methodists and the Establishment that we can hope for any cordial and permanent union to take place.

"If this point be worthy of your lordship's consideration, I could wish that something might be done as soon as convenient, as some of my most intimate friends, to whom I have ventured to disclose this plan, are far advanced in years. These are men of long standing, and of great influence in our connection. The plan

meets their decided approbation, and cordial wishes for success; and, I have no doubt, they would lay down their lives with joy, if they could see so happy a plan accomplished as I have now proposed. If an interview shall be thought necessary, on your lordship's signifying it, I will visit London for the purpose, about the beginning of next month. About the end of April my private plan will lead me to visit our numerous societies in Ireland, and I shall not return till the end of July, at which time our general conference will be held in Manchester. In September I intend setting off for America, to make a short visit of six or seven months to our societies on that continent, unless some business of the first importance prevent it.

"I did myself the honour, about a year ago, to lay this whole plan before the attorney general, with whom I had the honour of being acquainted at Oxford, and so far as a cursory view of the business could enable him to speak, he greatly approved of it, and, some months past, encouraged me to lay the whole at the feet of your lordship. This I have now done; and I pray you, my lord, whatever be your lordship's judgment, to forgive, at all events, the liberty I have now taken. I have the honour to be, my lord, &c., &c., T. Coke.

"*Manchester*, *March* 29, 1799.

In thus submitting to the inspection of the bishops the plan which he had formed for the immediate union of the Methodists with the church, Dr. Coke only pursued that path in which Count Zinzendorf had walked in the year 1737. "About the middle of January the count arrived in England. One principal object of this visit seems to have been to procure a union between the Moravian Church and the Church of England, in Georgia, and to get them acknowledged by this country as one church. As Georgia was supposed to be under the jurisdiction of the bishop of London, Mr. Wesley took an early opportunity of waiting on his lordship with the count's proposition. But the bishop refused to meddle in that business. He waited again on the bishop of Oxford, and informed him that the bishop of London declined having any thing to do with Georgia: alleging that it belonged to the archbishop to

unite the Moravians with the English Church. He replied that it was the bishop of London's proper office. He bid me," adds Mr. Wesley, "assure the count, we should acknowledge the Moravians as our brethren, and one church with us."*

Dr. Coke and his friends, whose conduct in proposing a union with the Episcopal Establishment was not altogether unsanctioned by Mr. Wesley, although his propositions appeared in another form, waited with some solicitude for the reply which the preceding letter was expected to produce. And it was not long before he was favoured with the following answer from the bishop of London:—

"*St. James' square*, *April* 5, 1799.

"Rev. Sir,—I received the favour of your letter of the 29th of last month, and have read it with great attention. It contains much important matter, which well deserves very serious consideration. The object you have in view is certainly very desirable; but how far the means you have proposed for attaining it are practicable, I cannot at present pretend to judge. But you may rest assured that I shall turn the subject frequently in my thoughts, and converse with the two archbishops upon it; and whenever we have formed any decisive opinion on the question you will hear of it from one of them, or from, sir, your faithful and obedient servant, B. London."

More than a fortnight elapsed from the date of the preceding letter before any consultation or communication took place between the bishops, which led to a decision on this affair. But the event proved that they viewed the subject in an important light, however inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed, they might think the measure recommended. This might be gathered from the tone of the preceding letter, the indecision of which, by discovering solicitude, was calculated to flatter hope, and to leave Dr. Coke wholly unprepared for the final reply which prevented all farther communication. This final reply was couched in the following terms:—

* Whitehead's Life of Mr. Wesley, vol. i, pp. 137–139.

"*Lambeth-house, Tuesday evening,*
April 22, 1799.

"REVEREND SIR,—Not having had it in my power to keep my promise of writing to you by last night's post, I assure myself of your pardon for that omission; and I now proceed to inform you of my sentiments, and those of the bishops with whom I have communicated on the subject of your letter, after the fullest and most deliberate consideration of its contents.

"That persons of tender consciences, who have scruples in respect to any points of religious doctrine or discipline, should be allowed all reasonable indulgence, we hold to be just and proper; but that a scruple avowed to be founded in a presumption that all the regularly ordained clergy of the Church of England are immoral, should be given way to; and that the bishops should, on such a suggestion, ordain a number of persons upon the recommendation of your general conference, without any other inquiry as to their fitness, and without any title or appointment to any place where they might legally exercise their functions; such a proposal, merely for the purpose of supplying congregations, which scruple to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper at the hands of our ministers whom they deem unworthy, with pastors whom they more approve, we must think it highly unjustifiable in us to comply with.

"We cannot but lament that persons of a religious and serious turn of mind should be likely to be separated from our communion by an ill opinion of our clergy, which we think ill founded, and upon a principle erroneous and not to be admitted were the opinion true, (see the 26th article of the Church of England.)

"We hope and trust, however, that a consequence so much to be deprecated may be averted by God's blessing on your pious exertions to bring your people to a better mind.

"To His holy protection I commend you heartily, and am faithfully, and with all good wishes,

"Your humble servant, J. CANTUAR."

Having traced this ineffectual effort to form a more permanent union between the Methodists and the church

from its cradle to its grave, it will be necessary to return once more to the year 1798, in which it had its birth, to survey some serious events which place Dr. Coke's character and conduct in a conspicuous and an interesting light.

It was early in this year that an alarming rebellion broke out in Ireland, which menaced the kingdom with all the horrors of a civil war. The condition of the country placed its inhabitants in an awful situation, and exposed those who had become servants of the Prince of peace to many peculiar dangers, from which others were exempted. As the period was approaching in which the Irish conference was to be held, many doubts were entertained respecting the propriety of holding it under existing circumstances; it being well known that those who had drawn the sword were enemies to righteousness, and that they would gladly avail themselves of an opportunity so favourable to massacre the preachers in one body. In addition to the doubts which they entertained of their personal safety from the rebels, it appeared very questionable how far government, to which they were strongly attached, might consider it prudent for them to assemble. These were points of serious moment, and it devolved on Dr. Coke, under divine Providence, to guide the helm in these troublesome times. In the duties of this perilous station he was made the happy instrument of much good, and was enabled, by having access to men in power, to whom his name was well known, to procure both liberty and protection for the preachers and himself.

On this subject, in a letter to Mr. Asbury in America, he makes the following observations:—"I have spent a considerable time since I had the pleasure of seeing you in Ireland. You have undoubtedly heard of the dreadful rebellion in that country. I was in Ireland at the height of it, and was obliged to employ much of my time in gaining the protection and interposition of the government of that kingdom in behalf of our suffering preachers. And God was pleased to give me success, without which, humanly speaking, they would not have held their conference, nor could many of them have travelled."

Nor is this the testimony of Dr. Coke exclusively.

The Irish conference, in an address to the English, have made the same acknowledgment; and the reply from the English to the Irish has recorded the fact in language of grateful approbation. Adverting to these calamitous times, the Irish conference express themselves as follows:—"We enjoy all the instituted and prudential ordinances, while in various parts houses of all denominations have been deserted. Our conference was not only held without molestation, but by permission of his excellency the lord lieutenant. Under God we owe this permission to the exertions of our worthy president, Dr. Coke, who, upon hearing of our danger and distress, flew on the wings of love from your land of safety and happiness to partake of our suffering, and to help us on our way to heaven. We feel ourselves highly obliged to him, and our hearts are so knit to him in love that we are assured you will approve of our earnest desire to have him delegated by you to us, not only to travel through the kingdom, but to preside among us the ensuing year. We consider this request as a duty we owe to Dr. Coke, whom we wish to share in the sunshine of prosperity with us, (which we hope will ere long rise upon our land,) as he now does in our dark and cloudy day."

In reply to this address the English conference observe as follows:—"To his unwearied exertions you are certainly indebted for the great privilege of travelling in safety to your respective circuits, as well as for permission to hold your conference without molestation."*

When the minds of men are actuated by proper principles, the favours conferred by governors are always sure to be repaid by their subjects. Benevolence begets gratitude, and gratitude is inseparably connected with obedience to just authority and law. That the Methodists of Ireland were influenced by these principles several instances might be adduced to prove. On grateful hearts no favour can ever be bestowed in vain.

The night before *Monasterevan* was attacked by an army of rebels, computed to be about two thousand in

* Methodist Magazine for 1798, pp. 547, 549.

number, thirty-six Methodists assembled in the preaching house with their families, and spent the night in prayer. Having had some previous intimation of the intention of the rebels, thirty-four of these brought with them their arms and ammunition. At break of day they received intelligence that the enemy were approaching. The thirty-four who were armed immediately sallied forth, being joined by a counsellor who was at a neighbouring inn, and met them at some distance from the town. The weather being very foggy, and it being early in the morning, the enemy could not distinguish their numbers. Both parties kept up an incessant fire; but the rebels advanced toward the town, while the loyalists retired. They, however, followed them in the rear, and the skirmish continued till many of the former and four of the latter had fallen.

Scarcely had the enemy entered the town before two hundred of black horse, as they were termed, arrived. But the rebels formed such a *chevaux de frize* with their pikes that they were afraid to advance. It was just at this moment that the rebel commander issued orders to set the town on fire. But his men being rather tardy to execute his commands, as he was passing through a window to hasten the conflagration, one of the survivors of the thirty-four, a lad of sixteen, levelled his musket at him, and shot him dead upon the spot. At this disaster a panic instantly seized the rebel army, and they fled in all directions. In their flight they were pursued by the cavalry, and the roads were covered with their dead bodies.

At *Kilbeggan*, a small party of yeomen, many of whom were Methodists, met a rebel army approaching to burn the town. The yeomen were headed by a Mr. Handy, of Braccacastle, an intimate friend of Dr. Coke. This gentleman and his sons, in conjunction with the yeomen, fought in the bravest manner, and repulsing the rebels with considerable loss, gained a complete victory.

The night before the rebellion broke out, one of the united Irishmen came to his brother in Dublin, about eight o'clock at night, entreating him to leave the town that night with his wife and children, but without

assigning any reason for this extraordinary request. His brother, who was a leader in the Methodist society, withstood his entreaties for about half an hour, and finally compelled him to retire in tears, from the absolute refusal in which he persisted to the last. On being alone, he began to reflect that the length and earnestness of his brother's importunity seemed to be accompanied with an air of mystery, which excited something more than mere idle curiosity. Under these impressions he went to the marshal provost, and informed him of the whole affair. The marshal went immediately to the castle, and laid before the lord lieutenant the suspicious circumstances. His lordship was instantly alarmed, as for some time he had anticipated a meditated insurrection. To prepare for the worst, the castle guns were instantly fired; the drums beat to arms; and an army of regulars and volunteers were assembled about eleven o'clock that night, and soon after midnight they marched out of the city. About three in the morning they met the rebel army nearly three miles from Dublin, approaching in full force toward it. A battle ensued, and the insurgents were defeated. Lord Camden was then lord lieutenant.

Among the various expedients to which wicked men have resorted to check the progress of the gospel, it has frequently been said that those who inculcate its principles and precepts are enemies to Cesar. There was a time when insinuations of this nature were urged against the Methodists; in opposition to which, positive denials could only present a feeble defence. Time, however, has accomplished what no language could effect; and the day in which they could be accused of disloyalty, with any probability of suspicion, has long since departed from the British shores. But the accusation has occasionally found an asylum in some of the West India islands; and this has been urged as a plausible pretext, why the slaves should be forbidden to hear the gospel. Yet even in these islands time has blunted the edge of calumny; and past events have furnished instances which the approbation of enlightened power enables us to record with pleasure.

It was not long after the commencement of the late

war with France, that the president of the council for the island of Tortola, who represented the governor, received information that the enemy were at that time fitting out an expedition at Guadaloupe against that island. Being aware that the military force then in Tortola was insufficient for its defence, he was reduced to the momentous alternative either to surrender to the invaders, or to arm the negroes to oppose them. It was in the latter he could find his only resource, and this was an expedient to which he even trembled to resort. Such, however, was his confidence in Mr. Turner, at that time superintendent of the Methodist societies in the Virgin Islands, and so strong was the conviction of his influence over the negroes, that he sent for him, and plainly stated their perilous condition. Relying on Mr. Turner's acquaintance with the dispositions of the slaves, he inquired whether they might be armed with safety. Mr. Turner was willing to vouch for the loyalty of those who were connected with the Methodists. Confiding in this, and in the influence of their example, he declared himself willing to arm the slaves, upon condition that Mr. Turner would accompany them in their military services. At first, the latter conceived a compliance with this request to be inconsistent with his station as a minister of the gospel. But finding the case to be urgent, and that the loss or preservation of the island probably depended upon his decision, he consented to the condition. The negroes were accordingly armed and trained, so far as time would allow. Within about a fortnight the French squadron arrived. But finding, as they approached the shore, a more formidable body to oppose them than they had been taught to expect, they first hesitated, and after cutting two merchant ships out of the bay, retired without making any attempt to land. During this time the negroes behaved with the utmost order, and, when directed, laid down their arms, and repaired to their accustomed employments.

Shortly after the preceding proof of their loyalty had been given, the governor of the Leeward Islands sent a request to the Methodist missionaries in Antigua and St. Christopher's, that they would make a return of all the negroes in their societies who were capable of bearing

arms, as ne had received satisfactory information of their loyalty and fidelity. A list was made out, and the negroes so returned were immediately armed, and incorporated among the defenders of their respective islands.

When Lord Livington returned to the West Indies to resume the government of the Leeward Islands, the missionaries presented to him an address. In reply to this, he expressed his entire approbation of their past conduct, from all the accounts he had received, and admitted this as the ground of his confidence in their future appropriate demeanour. From Mr. Thompson, the president of the council of St. Christopher's, who had been governor during the interim, they received a reply to their address, which was couched in terms of more than common approbation.

At the capture of Martinico these professions of loyalty were brought to a test of painful severity. It is well known that a regiment of blacks, employed in the reduction of this island, was much celebrated for its bravery. This was in part composed of negroes belonging to the Methodist societies. Several of them fell in the field of battle, and many others were mortally wounded. Some in their expiring moments breathed a spirit of loyalty, and expressed, in a pleasing manner, their fortitude in death, arising from their prospects of a glorious immortality.

In the island of St. Vincent, a plot had been laid among the negroes, to rise in one general insurrection and murder all the white inhabitants. Not long before this plot was to have been carried into execution, some intimation of their designs was communicated to a negro belonging to the Methodist society. The negro went immediately, and imparted the information to the missionary. Both immediately repaired to the governor, who, taking decisive measures for the security of the island, prevented the consequences of this intended massacre. Such instances of loyalty on each side of the Atlantic cannot fail to defeat the designs of slander, if they cannot impose silence on her tongue.

It was probably in consequence of these, and similar instances of advantage resulting from the instructions of

the negroes, that several noblemen who hold official stations under government have readily assisted in forwarding our missionary designs. The following letter, which was sent to Dr. Coke, affords a striking instance of this description:—

"*General Post Office, January* 3, 1799.

"SIR,—I am directed by the post master general to acquaint you, in answer to your letter of the 1st instant, that their lordships have been pleased to permit Mr. James Richardson and Mr. John Stephenson, who are going as missionaries to Jamaica and Bermuda, for the instruction of the negroes, to embark on board the packets, without payment of the king's head money, and I have signified the same to the agent at Falmouth, that he may suffer them to proceed accordingly.

"I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

"F. FREELING, *Secretary*.

"*Rev. T. Coke, City-Road.*"

It is painful to reflect that, among the political institutions of civil society, any regulations should ever be introduced to render that duty which we owe to our sovereign inconsistent with the superior obligations we owe to God. Such instances, however, have sometimes occurred; and, through the influence of their operation, many among the Methodists, who conceive that their duty to their sovereign and their God should go hand in hand, have been exposed to serious inconveniences. A case of this kind, occasioned by the following circumstances, happened in the island of Jersey in 1798, which furnished Dr. Coke with much employment, and gave him much trouble toward the conclusion of that year.

Shortly after the commencement of the late war with France, as the islands of Guernsey and Jersey lay exposed to an invasion, every measure deemed essential to their preservation was adopted, to put them in the most respectable state of defence. Among these expedients, in order that every man might be taught the use of arms, a municipal law appointed the Sabbath day for the purpose of training the inhabitants. To this profanation of this sacred day many serious persons refused to submit. This refusal brought upon them much pub-

lic odium, and exposed them to many unmerited sufferings. Application was made to the government at home, and his majesty in council was pleased to put a negative to the coercive operation of the law, and to grant to all serious people the liberty of being trained to arms on some other day. This noble mark of royal disapprobation, which was announced in the year 1794, softened, in a great degree, the severity of persecution; and, from that time forward, the beneficial consequences of this gracious interposition were perceived throughout the island by most of its inhabitants.

But, notwithstanding the preceding law, its virtual repeal, and the advantages which had resulted from its abrogation, the states of Jersey passed another of a similar nature, in the autumn of the year 1798, by which it was enacted that whosoever should refuse to do the customary military duty on a Sunday should be banished from the island. In passing this law the legislators were far from being unanimous; but the voices of the minority were overruled, and the edict was sent to England, to obtain the sanction of his majesty in council.

Dr. Coke, on hearing that this law had passed in the island, made use of every effort to prevent it from receiving the royal approbation, by pointing out to those members of his majesty's council to whom he could have access the consequences which must inevitably result from its operation.

His opposition was heard with great attention, while the necessity of the law was strenuously supported by those who had procured its enactment.

In consequence of this contention, a nobleman of the privy council, who had invariably protected the rights of conscience, wrote to the commander in chief at Jersey, to obtain his private opinion respecting the necessity of training the people on the Sabbath day. The reply of this gentleman was in favour of the law, and in communicating it to Dr. Coke, the nobleman observed, "From that answer, I was persuaded I could not urge him farther upon the business, without bringing on a very unpleasant and disagreeable misunderstanding between him and the government of the island. I could not be justified in doing so, and therefore I cannot think

it discreet in your friends to persist at present in establishing themselves on a spot where it appears that the opinions or prejudices of the island run so strongly against the indulgence they require."

Discouraging as these sentiments were, Dr. Coke was not disheartened, nor was the ardour of his soul to be overcome. Conscious of having justice on his side, he resolved to persevere, either till success should finally crown his efforts, or disappointment furnish him with a source of satisfaction, through life, that no exertion on his part had been wanting to procure the desired object.

The important moment at length arrived that was to give to this interesting question,—whether the people should or should not be compelled to be trained on the Sabbath day,—a final decision. It was then officially announced that "his majesty had been graciously pleased to refuse his royal assent to the law, in consequence of which it stood repealed."

On receiving this pleasing information, Dr. Coke immediately wrote to the right honourable the earl of Liverpool, the following letter:—

"My Lord,—I cannot refrain from expressing to your lordship that great obligation I feel to his majesty, to you, my lord, to the privy council, and to the government at large, for your and their gracious interference in behalf of our distressed friends in Jersey. I am perfectly conscious that nothing but pure justice would or could move you, my lord, or the government, in the affair; and yet the sense of your goodness will be indelibly written on my heart.

"I have the honour to be, with very high respect, my lord, your highly obliged, very humble, and very obedient and faithful servant, T. Coke.

"*New Chapel, City-Road, Dec.* 15, 1798."

This virtual repeal of the law soon reached Jersey, and toward the end of January, 1799, it was taken into legislative consideration. Some few gave it as their opinion, that the disapprobation of his majesty in council ought not to be registered. But the more liberal were of a different sentiment, and declared that it could not be avoided. Among these were the commander in

chief and a decided majority of the members. Here, therefore, these troubles ended, and the pious inhabitants of the island have since enjoyed their privileges in peace.

Adverting to these unpleasant circumstances, Dr. Coke, in a letter to a friend, thus expresses himself in reference to both islands :—" I am now in Guernsey, on my return from Jersey. I have been endeavouring to put an end to a dreadful persecution of our people, which was carried on for about six years ; and the Lord has given me the hearts of the king and his council, and has enabled me to bring this business to a happy conclusion."

Having finished his business in these islands, Dr. Coke intended sailing from St. Aubin, in Jersey, for England, by the packet, but was prevented by the following circumstance. The boat not being able to reach the shore sufficiently near for him to get in, a sailor, through pretended kindness, offered to take him on his back, and carry him on board. But, after getting into the water, instead of accomplishing the task he had voluntarily undertaken, he contrived to make a false step, and to plunge him headlong into the sea. Being completely drenched, he was obliged to return to the house of his friend, which he had previously left, in order to change his clothes; but, through this delay, the vessel sailed without him, and he did not reach England until several days had elapsed.

Affairs in Jersey having thus taken a favourable turn, the early part of the year 1799 was devoted by Dr. Coke almost exclusively to the service of the foreign missions, the support of which, with few exceptions, devolved wholly on himself. In the West Indies the work had considerably increased, so that twelve missionaries had been sent thither in the short space of eleven months. This had created a considerable expense, which, he observes, "was estimated at about 2,400*l.* But God has given us about 11,000 souls in these islands, beside those which had been safely lodged in Abraham's bosom. O what is money when compared with immortal souls for whom Christ died!"

His negotiations with the bishops having terminated as we have already seen ;—the preachers in Ireland

being permitted to travel without molestation;—and the privileges of the subject, as well as the dignity of public morals in the Norman Islands, being protected by the British government; he thought this a favourable opportunity to pay another visit to his friends on the American continent. Previously, however, to his departure, he repaired once more to Ireland. From Ireland he again returned to England, and after attending the conferences in both kingdoms, and soliciting contributions in all his journeys for the foreign missions, he proceeded on his eighth voyage across the Atlantic. But since neither his voyage, nor the consequent journeys to which it led, contain any thing essentially different from those which have been already described, a detail of facts would partake more of repetition than variety.

Dr. Coke, on his embarkation, carried with him another address from the English conference, again soliciting the American brethren not to enforce with rigour the promise which he had previously made, but requesting them to permit his return to England, as they thought his presence necessary on various accounts. To this address the conference at Baltimore returned the following reply:—

"We have considered, with the greatest attention, the request you have made for the doctor's return to Europe; and after revolving the subject deeply in our minds, and spending part of two days in debating thereon, we still feel an ardent desire for his continuance in America. This arises from the critical state of Bishop Asbury's health, the extension of our work, our affection for, and approbation of the doctor, and his probable usefulness, provided he continue with us. We wish to detain him, as we greatly need his services. But the statement you have laid before us in your address, of the success of the West India missions under his superintendence, the arduous attempt to carry the gospel among the native Irish requiring his influence and support, and the earnest request you have added to this representation, 'Believing it to be for the glory of God,' hath turned the scale at present in your favour. We have, therefore, in compliance with your request, *lent* the doctor to you for a season, to return to us as soon

as he conveniently can, but at farthest by the meeting of our next general conference.

"Signed by order and in the behalf of the general conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the United States of America,

"FRANCIS ASBURY,
"RICHARD WHATCOAT.

"*Baltimore, May* 9, 1800."

Dr. Coke continued either on the continent or in the West Indies during the remaining part of the year 1799, and through a considerable portion of 1800, after which he once more revisited Ireland. In that kingdom he found, on his arrival, that both the preachers and the societies had been permitted to enjoy as much peace as the disordered state of the country had given them reason to expect, and that religion had flourished even amid the devastations which rebellion had occasioned.

But, although peace was thus enjoyed in Ireland, he was compelled to learn, with sorrow, that the torch of persecution had been lighted up in the Summer Islands. Mr. Stephenson, who had been permitted to sail from Falmouth without paying the king's *head money*, proceeded on his voyage, according to appointment, and reached Bermuda in safety. On his arrival, the aspect of things appeared favourable. His preaching was attended with success; many were awakened, and domestic tranquillity prevailed. But after some time, when he began to address the negroes, his conduct gave such considerable offence to the white men in power, that they united their influence to prevent him altogether from publishing those truths which they had previously sanctioned with their approbation.

It happened that at this time there was no law in existence in the islands which prohibited the conduct pursued by Mr. Stephenson. But a spirit of persecution, when it is associated with power, rarely fails to find means for the execution of its plans and purposes. On the 24th of May, 1800, the colonial legislature passed a law which they thus entitled, "An act to prevent persons pretending, or having pretended, to be ministers of the gospel, or missionaries from any religious society whatever, and not invested with holy orders according

to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England or the Church of Scotland, from acting as preachers or schoolmasters." The penalties annexed to the violation of this law were a fine of 50*l.* and discretionary imprisonment.

As this law was evidently made to silence Mr. Stephenson, by specifying certain qualifications which it was well known he did not possess; and as it could not be permanent until it received the royal sanction, he viewed it in no other light than as an act of persecution, to which he could not conscientiously submit. He therefore continued preaching as before, being fully resolved to wait the event. He did not long remain ignorant of the consequence of his perseverance. On the 24th of June he was taken into custody, and committed to the public jail, to take his trial at the next assizes in the December following. On his first commitment it was his intention to remain in jail until his trial; but, as it was a bailable offence, and living in confinement was particularly expensive, at the end of fifteen days he procured sureties for his appearance at the time required.

The trial which followed was perfectly in unison with the law that made preaching criminal. Mr. Stephenson was found guilty of the offence, with the aggravating circumstances of having shaken hands with some of the black people after preaching, and was therefore condemned to lie in the common jail for six months, to pay a fine of 50*l.*, and to discharge the fees of court. He was recommitted immediately after his trial, pursuant to his sentence, and continued in jail until June, 1801; and, when liberated, he was so emaciated through his long confinement in this sultry climate that he never afterward fully recovered from the injuries he had sustained.

As the Methodist missionaries were always sure to find in Dr. Coke an unwearied advocate and a genuine friend, an account of the preceding transactions was transmitted to him as they occurred, that he might take such steps as should be deemed necessary to prevent the edict from receiving the royal sanction. It was necessary, also, that it should be negatived as soon as possible, for, until this was done, it continued to operate

with all the force of law. A memorial was accordingly drawn up by this indefatigable man, to be presented to his majesty in council, and letters were instantly addressed to the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, the duke of Portland, and others, setting forth the occasion of the Bermuda law, and stating the consequences which had already resulted from its unsanctioned operation.

The memorial written by Dr. Coke on this occasion gives a perspicuous statement of facts, and displays an extensive acquaintance with the British constitution. The noblemen to whom he appealed immediately interested themselves in behalf of his request, and boldly espoused the cause of religious toleration. To Dr. Coke several letters were written by them, and they transmitted their sentiments to the governor of Bermuda. The tone of their expressions soon softened the rigour of Mr. Stephenson's confinement; but through the delay which a multiplicity of business must always occasion where the affairs of an empire are transacted, it was not until Mr. Stephenson had worn out the period of his imprisonment that the rights of conscience were crowned with another triumph. His majesty was at length graciously pleased to refuse his royal sanction to the law in question, so that the Bermuda Islands were once more free for missionary exertions. These providential openings have been since embraced, and we have now a small but flourishing society established in peace.

The affairs of Bermuda had not been brought to a full termination, before Dr. Coke's attention was arrested by a singular circumstance which strongly marks the power of conscience; and which furnished him with an opportunity of rescuing the character of his deceased friend, the Rev. John Wesley, from some aspersions that had been cast on his reputation.

It was not long after Mr. Wesley's death, which took place in 1791, that a pamphlet made its appearance in the world, professing to give a short history of his life, and to derive its information from authentic sources. This pamphlet, which was not destitute of literary merit, nor deficient in those ingredients which traduction always finds it needful to employ in the garb of plausibility, soon found among the dissolute and the gay a

number of admirers, who gladly availed themselves of the sanction which it afforded to lessen his reputation, by retailing the stories which it contained. Among other things the author published two letters, which he professed to be the genuine production of Mr. Wesley's pen, addressed to a young lady on the subject of love, at a time when he was far advanced in years, and when all his friends had beheld him making preparations for leaving the world. These letters contained nothing which the world would call dishonourable; but, being written in a peculiar strain of canting gallantry, they excited much notice; and, in the estimation of those who believed their authenticity, to ensure which every artifice was employed, degraded his character, by contrasting them with his other writings and his years. From this pamphlet these letters found their way into many of the London and provincial papers, and in some publications they continue to be circulated even to the present day.

To prevent all suspicion of their authenticity, the author declared that the original letters, in the handwriting of Mr. Wesley, were then in his possession, and that they should be open to the inspection of any person who would call at a given place to examine them. With this open declaration many were satisfied; but others who continued incredulous actually called. Unfortunately, however, they always happened to call either when the author was engaged, or when he was from home, or when these original letters were lent for the inspection of others! It so happened that, though they were always open to examination, they could never be seen.

Ten years had passed away from the first appearance of this publication before the secret was disclosed. In the interim those who had been interested in the issue, after being divided between credulity and disbelief, had mutually suffered the affair to rest in peace. But peace was not the portion allotted for the author. Stung with remorse for having wronged the character of a worthy man, he voluntarily sent to Dr. Coke the following letter, which I copy from the original at this moment before me:—

"To the Rev. Dr. Coke, New Chapel, City-Road, London.

"*Saturday morning*, *January* 24, 1801.

"REV. SIR,—As the author of a silly pamphlet published some years ago, entitled '*An impartial review of the Life and Writings of the Rev. J. Wesley*,' I have taken the liberty of addressing you on that subject for the purpose of disburthening my mind, in some degree, of that intolerable weight with which it has been oppressed in consequence of the folly and wicked tendency of that publication; and I now candidly declare to you and to the world that most of the pretended facts therein mentioned are groundless; the charges sometimes false; and the characters as delineated therein, both of the Rev. Mr. W. and others, are generally unjust, and unsanctioned even by my own opinion. At the same time, I flatter myself you will have the candour to believe that my motives in the publication were influenced rather by folly and wantonness than deliberate wickedness; more especially if it be taken into consideration that at that time I entertained sentiments somewhat different from what I do at present.

"I expect from your known liberality that no undue advantage will be taken of the candid declaration now made, (though you are at liberty, if you think proper, to make it public.) Wishing you, in the meanwhile, all imaginable prosperity in the great work in which you are so usefully and zealously engaged, I beg leave to subscribe myself, Rev. sir,

"Your most obedient, humble servant,

"J. COLLET.

"*No.* 9, *Church-row*, *Pancras*, *Middlesex*.

"P. S. I forgot to say that the two infamous letters in the pamphlet attributed to Mr. Wesley are fictitious, being the invention of my own disordered imagination.

"J. C."

Dr. Coke's anxiety to make this letter public was not less ardent than his joy on receiving it. But being unwilling to violate the restrictions which had been confided to his honour, he wrote to Mr. Collet, requesting of him the liberty to send copies of his letter into the world, through the medium of the press, that where the poison had been diffused the antidote might follow. At

the same time he proposed calling on him on some future occasion, if such an interview would be agreeable. These propositions drew from Mr. Collet the following note :—

"J. Collet's respects to Dr. Coke, informs him that he has no manner of objection to his letter being made public by *the means of the press;* but would not wish it by any other means, if Dr. Coke thinks that would answer the same end. J. C. is sorry he cannot be at home the hour Dr. Coke proposes to call on him, but hopes this note will answer the same end.

"*Friday morning, January* 29, 1801."

These letters, agreeably to the liberty granted by Mr. Collet, were accordingly made public in several papers, and copies were printed in some periodical publications. Connected as they are with the life of Dr. Coke, they claim some notice in this volume, to show his readiness to vindicate his deceased friend, to distinguish his sense of honour in omitting to publish them without first obtaining permission; and above all, to exhibit to others the influence of conscience, even after many years had elapsed between the crime that was committed and the confession which it extorted.

CHAPTER XV.

Dr. Coke establishes the Welsh missions—Publishes some parts of his commentary—Embarks on his ninth voyage to America—Attempts to establish a mission in Gibraltar—Death of Mr. and Mrs. M'Mullen—First interview with Miss Penelope Goulding Smith—Marries her—Mode of travelling—Her death, character, and epitaph—Finishes his commentary—Projects the History of the West Indies—History of the Bible—System of philosophy compiled—Publishes a Welsh translation of his commentary—Persecution in Jamaica—Substance of the colonial edict—Finally disallowed by his majesty in council—In danger of being lost in a voyage to Ireland—Publishes a reply to the Rev. Melville Horne—Alarm occasioned by Lord Sidmouth's bill—Cottager's Bible published in numbers—Circular letter to all the superintendents—Weary of employing travellers to sell his works—Disposes of all his literary property to the conference.

THERE are few men beside Dr. Coke, under whose care the superintendence of the missions could have

been placed, but would have thought that those already established among the scattered inhabitants of Nova Scotia, the slaves in the West Indies, and the wild natives of Ireland, were fully equal to the means of supporting them. But calculations like these, when the interest of immortal spirits was at stake, did not suit the ardour of his soul. Anxious to promote the kingdom of the Redeemer, and strong in faith, giving glory to God, his love for the welfare of Zion inspired him with confidence in the divine goodness that no prudent effort to extend the gospel would ultimately fail for want of temporal resources. Full of these convictions, he formed a plan in 1800 for introducing the doctrines of the Wesleyan Methodists among the Welsh in their native tongue. This scheme was thought at first to be romantic; and in case of its ultimate failure those who opposed the measure would, in all probability, have triumphed in the display of their own penetration. But God favoured the exertions of his servant, and crowned his pious efforts with more than common success.

The work, indeed, was small and feeble in its commencement; but through all its stages it furnished a pleasing ground for hope. Within the short space of ten years, no less than sixty chapels were erected in these regions, which were filled with large and attentive congregations. The societies kept pace with the chapels and congregations. These contained 5,218 members: and, among these, no less than thirty-six travelling preachers were raised up, to carry on the work, by preaching in the same language; and these were accompanied with a still greater number who acted in a local capacity.

Nor was Dr. Coke deceived in the resources for which he had confided in divine Providence. His exertions were indeed redoubled with the exigence of the occasion; but the liberality of the people to whom he appealed corresponded with the demands of the increasing work, so that his embarrassments were not augmented in proportion to the magnitude of the undertaking. At this time the raising of supplies for all the missions still rested almost exclusively on himself. But his health, his vigour, his diligence, and his zeal, remained unim-

paired, and these were adequate to the occasion of his unremitting toils.

But great and numerous as the claims of the missions were, upon his time and attention, they did not so far engross the whole as to draw his mind from his literary engagements. They retarded his progress, but they could not abate his energy. His leisure moments, wherever he travelled, were devoted to his commentary, which was fast ripening for publication.

Nine years had now elapsed, since, at the request of conference, he had entered on this laborious task; during which time he had been arranging his compilation, adjusting his original and adopted annotations, and preparing them for the world. In the year 1799, he announced the Old Testament to be ready for publication, and proposals were made for printing the work. In 1801, it made its appearance in numbers, and met from an enlightened public that support which its intrinsic merit might embolden it to claim. Hitherto nothing of any considerable magnitude had been published on the Bible among the Methodists. This voluminous work, consisting of six quarto volumes, may therefore be regarded as forming an era in the literary history of Methodism. Various intervening causes obstructed the regular publication of the numbers, so that the commentary on the Old Testament and the New was not fully delivered to the subscribers until the year 1807.

The support of the missions, and the publication of his commentary, occupied his time and care in a more particular manner throughout the years 1801 and 1802. During these periods he found it necessary to make some arrangements for the circulation of his numbers which he had not been taught to expect. And in addition to this, as he was once more about to visit his friends on the western side of the Atlantic, prudence directed him to provide materials for the press during his absence. This was accordingly done; and the correction of the sheets was committed to the care of a gentleman in London, whose ability rendered him equal to the undertaking, and whose execution of the task assigned him entitles him to the thanks of every reader who is capable of feeling gratitude for a degree of typographical

perfection which few works of such magnitude have ever yet attained.

Having made all necessary preparations for his voyage, Dr. Coke sailed in the autumn of 1803 on his ninth voyage to the western world. But of this voyage no remarkable circumstances are known, as he either kept no journal, or else that journal is lost.* From the following passage, which occurs in a letter written by Mr. Asbury, it appears that the present voyage was accomplished with considerable expedition, which scarcely allowed room for many observations.

"I was a little surprised," says this venerable apostle of the continent, "at the reception of a letter dated Petersburg, only about fifteen days after one dated Dublin, July 4, 1803. You have hastened your escape from the storm and tempest of war and of water. O may you find a safe retreat, and a field of great usefulness upon our continent." This letter, which is dated Charleston, November 23, 1803, and is addressed to Bishop Coke, Light-street chapel, Baltimore, points out a track of nearly 5,000 miles in length, which he was earnestly invited to pursue, in order that he might visit the seven annual conferences on the continent prior to his return. This was a tour, which, according to Mr. Asbury's letter, would take him about nine months to accomplish. Whether he acceded to the proposal is, to the writer of

* Of the particular number of times that Dr. Coke crossed the Atlantic, different opinions have been entertained; and hence various accounts have been published. To this uncertainty the deficiency in his published journals has in no small degree contributed. It, however, appears, from an inspection of his private papers, that in going and returning, he crossed the Atlantic no less than eighteen times. Of his first five voyages an account is published in his journals, and the particulars of another are inserted in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1798. Among his private papers some memorials are preserved in his own handwriting of his seventh and eighth voyages, with their dates respectively fixed, as stated in the preceding pages. His ninth and last voyage is ascertained from his own letters now in the author's possession, and from the date of others addressed to Dr. Coke while in America in the year 1803, as mentioned above. It also appears from his own handwriting that he visited the West Indies four times; but in what particular years, as he has omitted some of the dates, the writer has not been able to ascertain. He mentions the fact in a memorial presented to the king.

these pages, very uncertain. It is equally doubtful whether he visited the West Indies from the continent prior to his return, or whether he had taken his leave, which eventually proved to be final, on a former occasion. It is however certain, that he was at Baltimore about the end of November, 1803; and it may be fairly presumed that he did not revisit England until several months had elapsed in the year 1804, at which time he took his leave of the continent, to visit it no more.

It was during this last visit to the United States, that Dr. Coke repaired to the city of Washington, and preached in the capitol, before the American congress. His discourse was on the wisdom, dignity, and importance of the gospel, as contrasted with the spirit of the world. And from the testimony of a gentleman, who took him in his carriage to the capital, it appears that his sermon was considered as both eloquent and sublime.

Finding, on his return to England, that the missions, both at home and abroad, were in a flourishing condition, he turned his attention to Gibraltar, to which place he had been importuned to send missionaries several years before. Already had the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists made their appearance on this southern extremity of Europe, through some pious soldiers who were stationed in that fortress, but with whose solicitations, until the present year, he found it inconvenient to comply.

It was in the autumn of 1804, that Mr. M'Mullen, with his wife and an infant daughter, went thither as a missionary. Their voyage was long and dangerous; but storms and contrary winds were to his family only the beginning of sorrows. After having been driven on the Barbary coast, they reached Gibraltar about the end of September, but found, on their arrival, that the yellow fever was raging among all ranks with unexampled violence. Every thing was in confusion. Consternation everywhere prevailed. The report of death was heard in almost every dwelling; and every face was covered with horror.

The child was taken ill almost immediately on their arrival, but survived the disease. On the first of Octo-

ber, Mr. M'Mullen wrote a letter to England, describing the calamities of their condition. With the same fatal disease he was seized on the tenth, and on the eighteenth he was a lifeless corpse. At the time of his decease his wife felt symptoms of the same disorder; and after lingering a little longer than her husband, followed him to the world of spirits, and the house appointed for all living, leaving their surviving orphan in the hands of strangers, in the midst of pestilence, in a foreign land. By the first convenient opportunity Miss M'Mullen was sent to England, and consigned to the care of Dr. Coke.

This train of disasters was not without its natural effects. To a superficial observer it seemed to wear the frown of Omnipotence. But we know that the way of God is in the whirlwind, and that shades, more or less, accompany all his dispensations. It was not till the year 1808, that another missionary was sent to Gibraltar. His labours were attended with the divine blessing; and his successors still continue to behold the fruit of their exertions in the cause of God.

It would be a severe reflection on the character of Dr. Coke, if, while appealing to the benevolence of the liberal, in support of the missions, he had been parsimonious of his own personal property. But with this inconsistency of character he never can be charged. His property, like his time and life, was at the service of the missions; and to supply deficiencies in the collections which he made, as well as to assist the societies in foreign parts, in completing the chapels which they found it necessary to build, he expended the whole of his patrimonial inheritance. A considerable portion of this was freely given to support the work of God; and such sums as he lent were advanced on securities, which common prudence would teach men, who calculate on an accumulation of wealth, to reject. But these were advanced, with a strong confidence in God, to promote his cause in the earth; and on the whole his losses were less considerable than might have been expected. His example and his precepts therefore associated in the appeals which he made; and God, in both, was pleased to repay his confidence, even in this life, with an ample remuneration.

It frequently happens, in the progress of human life, that our movements are influenced by unforeseen events, and that we are conducted to issues which were concealed from anticipation. It was from such a train of circumstances that Dr. Coke was introduced to a lady whose unexampled liberality awakened his surprise, and whose benevolent disposition toward the cause of God so far gained his affections from a congeniality of soul, that in the space of a few months she became his wife. The occasion of their meeting was briefly as follows:—

Dr. Coke, while travelling through the country, soliciting support for the missions, happened in the early part of the year 1805, to visit Bristol. Consulting with Mr. Pawson, whose letter had brought him thither, about the plan of his proceeding through the city, he was strongly urged to call on a Miss Smith, a lady who was at once generous and rich, but who was indisposed, and was then at the Hot Wells, for the recovery of her health. Pleased with the prospect of a donation that would bear some resemblance to the favourable reports of her liberality, which he had heard with pleasure, he repaired in company with Mr. Pawson to her lodgings. Having stated, on being introduced, the occasion of his intrusion, Miss Smith, with a countenance beaming with generosity, immediately subscribed *one hundred guineas;* but observed that, as at that moment she had no money to spare, she would thank Dr. Coke to call on her at Bradford, in Wiltshire, to which place she should shortly return, when she would pay him her subscription. At the same time she invited him, and Mr. and Mrs. Pawson, to dine with her in Bristol, with which invitation they complied, and found her soul truly alive to God. Such was their first interview, as stated by Dr. Coke, in a letter which is now before the author.

Astonished at the gift, which became enhanced in its value by the manner in which it was bestowed, Dr. Coke remained, for some moments, absorbed in silent admiration, on the discovery of one hundred guineas being added to her name; and found himself at a loss for language to express the gratitude of his heart for this evidence of her strong attachment to the cause of God. From her conversation while at dinner, and afterward,

he soon found that the bent of her soul was so far congenial with that of his own, that they appeared to be mutually affected by the same hopes and fears, and to be actuated by the same powerful principle; and he began to think her a suitable companion for his declining years. Calling on her at Bradford, for the payment of her subscription, he was fully confirmed in his favourable opinion, and more especially so, as, instead of repining at her former liberality, she gave him *two hundred guineas*, while he expected only one. From this time an acquaintance began, which led to their marriage in April, 1805.

As Miss Smith had regularly kept a diary of her experience, and of the passing events which occurred, in the issue of which she was interested, and continued the practice for some considerable time after her marriage, it is not to be expected that she would pass over the solemnization of this event in total silence. From her papers, the following paragraphs, written on the day of her marriage, are copied literally, to show the spirit of piety that reigned in her heart, and breathed through the productions of her pen.

"*Monday*, *April* 1, 1805.

"My most beloved brother in Christ, Dr. Coke, and myself, being clearly and fully convinced, it was our gracious God's holy will and pleasure for us to be united; and being fully and entirely satisfied, that we could lay ourselves out much more for the glory of God, and live in a greater degree of devotedness to him in the married than in a single state; and that God would be very graciously present with us, and bless us in a peculiar manner; in consequence of this being made manifest to us from our God, we presented ourselves before him, made a solemn surrender of ourselves to him, and under him to each other, and were solemnly married in the Lord this morning; our God condescended to be very graciously present with us. O our gracious Lord God, accept, we humbly beseech thee, of this solemn surrender we have made of ourselves. Unto thee we give up our whole selves, bodies, souls, and spirits, all we have and all we are, unto thee; to thee altogether and entirely. O accept of our surrender

and sacrifice in and through the Son of thy love! And may we, by the help of thine almighty power and goodness, show forth thy praise continually, not only with our lips, but in our lives. Lord, help us so to do. Bless my most beloved husband and me, in our new relation to each other. O bless us, bless us, bless us. May we be thine altogether, thine now, henceforth, and for evermore! Amen and Amen!

"And O, my dearest Lord, accept of my most grateful thanks for providing for me, in thine infinite wisdom and goodness, such a precious follower of thine. Make me a helpmeet worthy of him. Let me not be a hinderance, but of thy love and mercy a fartherance to him in every work of faith and labour of love: and give us continually such degrees of grace, that whether we live, we may live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we may die unto the Lord; so that living and dying we may be thine, O God, eternally thine! Amen and Amen!

"PENELOPE G. COKE."

This lady, who prior to her marriage had been almost secluded from the world, was the only surviving child of Joseph Smith, Esq., an eminent solicitor of Bradford, in Wiltshire; who, at his death, had bequeathed to her an ample fortune. This, being at her own disposal, she was ready to devote to the cause of God, and particularly so in the missionary department, in which her husband was engaged. She accordingly consented to leave the scenes of her secluded retirement, and to travel with him through the kingdom. But her constitution had been so impaired through her father's undue solicitude to preserve her health, that she was ill adapted to bear the fatigues of her new station, or to mix with the numerous and diversified strangers to whom she was introduced while they were prosecuting their journeys.

To furnish her with every accommodation while travelling, Dr. Coke purchased a plain carriage, in which, without servants, and with hired horses, they travelled from place to place, by such easy stages as her health would allow. But as they had no certain dwelling place, they were compelled to carry with them a greater quantity of books, papers, and wearing apparel than might have been necessary in any other situation in

life. This was sometimes an inconvenience to their friends, at whose houses they occasionally lodged, and an incumbrance to themselves, which many could discover, but none could prevent.

Thus happy in accommodating themselves to each other's wants and wishes, several years passed away in the autumn of life, in works of charity, and in deeds of benevolence, which gave new charms to their connubial felicity. To the pensioners who lived in a great measure on her bounty, prior to her marriage, Mrs. Coke continued her liberal donations during life; and after her death, her widowed husband forbade any change to take place in the allotted stipends of such as survived. Her works praised her in the gates; and her name will be long remembered in Bradford by the poor and the afflicted; while her example may serve to stimulate others to imitate her virtuous deeds. Her piety was of the most exalted kind. She seemed to enjoy constant communion with God, and to breathe on all around her that spirit of love which glowed continually in her heart.

Of this amiable companion of his toils and years, Dr Coke was deprived on the 25th of January, 1811. She died at the house of John Holloway, Esq., City-Road, London, after a short illness, and was interred in the family vault of her husband, in the priory church at Brecon, in Wales. A succinct account of this pious and benevolent woman was published by her disconsolate husband in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1812; not long after he had honoured her memory with the following epitaph, which is engraven on a marble over her tomb:—

Near this Place
Lie the Remains of
PENELOPE GOULDING COKE,
DAUGHTER OF JOSEPH SMITH, ESQUIRE,
late an eminent Attorney,
at Bradford, in Wiltshire,
and WIFE of THOMAS COKE, LL.D.,
of the University of Oxford.
She was born at Bradford, in 1762,
was married in April, 1805,
and died in London on the 25th of January, 1811.
She was a Woman
In whom the common virtues which adorn her sex
were eclipsed
by those more exalted Graces
that ornament the Christian Character.
Through Life
She was subject to many bodily afflictions,
which would have taught her by painful experience
to feel for the distresses of others,
if she had not learned the same Lesson
from a better Instructer.
Although her Fortune was ample,
it was unequal to her liberality;
And even this
fell short of her ardent desire to do good.
Humility, Patience,
Resignation, and Gratitude,
were the constant Companions
of her latter years:
During which time
She fed the Poor by her Bounty
and instructed the Rich by her Example.
Her constant Communion
with her God
Rewarded her with present Peace,
and, in the full Assurance of Faith
in the Atonement of her Redeemer,
and the Sanctifying Influences
of his blessed Spirit,
Opened before her a prospect
Of Everlasting Felicity.
That a Person
so eminently Pious and Useful
should be thus snatched away
in the Prime of Life,
From a world in which she was so much wanted,
is not less mysterious,
than if she had been suffered to remain in it.
Such peculiar
Dispensations of God
afford a convincing argument
in favour of a Future State.
May those who read this Inscription
Imitate her Example,
And finally partake of her Eternal Reward.

To the missions that had been already established, Dr. Coke, soon after his marriage in 1805, began to contemplate the expediency of making an addition. This was to send missionaries into such parts of this kingdom as were not included in any regular circuit, and where the inhabitants scarcely ever visited any place of public worship. In attempting to carry this scheme into effect, he was opposed by many, who conceived that the means of support would be inadequate to the magnitude of the undertaking. But his own resources encouraged him to persevere. He was therefore fixed in his purpose, and the point was carried.

In stating the necessity of establishing this mission, and in marking its origin and progress, Dr. Coke, in the report for the year 1808, makes the following observations:—

"When our friends and brethren reflect on the vast extent to which the gospel has been published through this kingdom within the last twenty years, many of them may be led to wonder why these missions should be thought necessary. But their astonishment will cease when they are informed that, out of the 11,000 parishes which England and Wales contain, perhaps one-half of them seldom or never hear the gospel. In numerous small towns, villages, and hamlets, a very considerable part of the inhabitants attend no place of worship whatever, nor once think of entering a religious edifice, except when marriages, baptisms, or funerals occur. It is among people of this description that our missions have been chiefly established.

"Within these last three years God has so blessed these means, that great numbers who had been living without hope and without God in the world, have, through divine grace, been brought to know in whom they have believed. In addition to these, vast numbers have been induced to entertain a relish for the gospel of which they had scarcely before ever had a conception. Among these several new circuits have been formed, and considerable congregations collected. Thirty-five missionaries were appointed by our last conference for this home department; and we are happy to find from their labours, and those of their predecessors, that the

predominant vices are considerably on the decline, and that multitudes flock to the standard of Christ, as doves to the windows." From the year 1808 to the present time, these home missions have been attended with prosperity; and events have proved that they are needful auxiliaries to the regular circuits, by adding to their extent, and by augmenting their number.*

The expense occasioned by the various missions which were established in Nova Scotia, in the West Indies, in Gibraltar, in Ireland, in Wales, and in the uncultivated parts of this country, was now become a subject of serious moment. Dr. Coke had been instrumental in the establishment of almost all; and the support of all had rested principally on his personal exertions until the year 1804, at which time public collections in their favour were appointed by conference throughout the connection. Dr. Coke was president of the conference in 1805, when the home missions were established; and this circumstance, perhaps, in conjunction with that respect which was due to him for his past exertions, prevented the opposition made to his proposition from being successful; especially as the property he had acquired by marriage, it was well known, would be ready to supply deficiencies in the public and private contributions.

The history of his life in the years 1806, 1807, and 1808, furnishes but few incidents that can claim a place in his biography. During these periods he was publicly employed in visiting the societies; in attending the conferences both in England and Ireland; in begging from door to door; and in completing his commentary. In his private hours he endeavoured to estimate the advantages which might probably result from new publications, when his quarto volumes were finished, and in making arrangements for such works as have since made their appearance in the world.

During the early part of the year 1806, his time was chiefly engrossed with the work which his commentary afforded. But toward the conclusion of the year, he had so far overcome this pressure, that he contemplated

* These home missions are now considered as circuits, and are supported from another fund.

the history of the West Indies; made preparations for his history of the Bible; and got ready for the press his answer to Mr. Nott; to which we have alluded in an early part of this volume.

It was on the 7th of June, 1807, that the last sheet of his commentary was finished for the printer. But after this, in order to review the passing events which at that time astonished Europe, and even the whole civilized world, he published an appendix to it, which was afterward printed in a separate volume, entitled the "Recent Occurrences of Europe," &c. This was followed by an index in the same year, which gave the finishing stroke to his voluminous work.

In 1808 his System of Philosophy was compiled, but its publication was suspended until a future day. It was his intention, also, during this year, to collect all his journals, both printed and unprinted, to connect them with the most remarkable incidents of his life, and to intersperse them with such anecdotes as would at once amuse and instruct his readers. He was, however, diverted from accomplishing this purpose, by receiving the unpleasant tidings that an act had passed the legislative assembly in Jamaica, which exposed the missionaries in that island to all the violence of colonial persecution. To prevent this law from becoming permanent by receiving the royal sanction, Dr. Coke once more applied to his friends in power, and received from several some flattering assurances that persecution would not be sanctioned either by his majesty or council. But, as the act had not yet arrived, nothing at present could be done to relieve those who suffered from its coercive influence. This circumstance afforded him leisure to procure a Welsh translation of his commentary on the New Testament, which he began to publish in that language at the close of the year. It was, however, impeded for some time by the improper conduct of a person whom he had employed as a translator. This man took occasion to introduce sentiments that were diametrically opposite to those which he found in the original.

In the early part of the year 1809, Dr. Coke found it necessary to watch the progress of the Jamaica law,

which was now presented for royal sanction. The law in question, after recommending to the proprietors of slaves the instruction of them in the principles of the Christian faith, proceeds with its prohibitory and penal clauses in the following manner:—"Provided, nevertheless, that the instruction of such slaves shall be confined to the doctrines of the Established Church in this island; and that no Methodist missionary, or other sectary or preacher, shall presume to instruct our slaves, or to receive them into their houses, chapels, or conventicles, of any sort or description, under the penalty of twenty pounds for every slave proved to have been there, and to be recovered in a summary manner before any three justices of the peace; who, or the majority of whom, are hereby authorized and empowered to issue their warrant for the recovery of the same, and on refusal of payment to commit the offender or offenders to the county jail until the payment of the said fine or fines, which shall be paid over to the churchwardens of the parish where the offence shall be committed, for the benefit of the poor of such parish.

"Passed the assembly, this 11th of November, 1807.

"PHILIP REDWOOD, *Speaker*.

"Passed the council, this 27th of November, 1807.

"R. ROBERTSON, *Cl. Council*.

"I consent, this 28th of November, 1807.

"EYRE COOTE."

Of this law and its concomitant ordinances, together with the manner of their operation and the effects which resulted from them, a detailed account has been published by Dr. Coke in the second volume of his History of the West Indies. Many months elapsed after this colonial edict was enacted before it made its appearance in England. It was withheld so long as the political principles of the cōnstitution of Jamaica would allow, that during the interim it might operate without being ratified; and that the period of its repeal, which its most sanguine supporters were induced from the enormity of its clauses to anticipate, might be protracted as much as possible. And even finally, when it came, it was accompanied by an agent from Jamaica, who

appeared to be delegated to enforce its clauses, and procure, if possible, the royal approbation.

Dr. Coke and his friends in the meanwhile were not idle. They presented a petition, as they had done before on similar occasions, "to the king's most excellent majesty in council;" setting forth the advantages which had resulted to the negroes from the establishment of the mission in this island, and adverting to the effects which had already been produced by the imprisonment of the missionaries, the shutting up of the chapels, the dispersion of the pious negroes in society, and anticipating consequences still more dreadful, that might be expected to ensue in case this edict should unhappily receive the royal sanction.

To the right honourable the lords of the committee of privy council for trade and plantations, a memorial of a similar nature was also presented; and the issue was anticipated with a degree of solicitude which Dr. Coke was able to feel in all its force. He was not without his hopes; but he was not wholly destitute of fears. He knew the liberal disposition of his majesty and of his royal ancestors; and in the penetrating discernment of the honourable privy council he placed the most unbounded confidence. But he had to oppose the combined influence of wealth and interest; and he well knew, from the tardy movements which were made in the abolition of the slave trade, that religion and humanity may have claims which cannot always be heard.

At an early period of this persecution, before the chapel doors were completely shut, none but men of free condition were permitted to enter, and sentinels were appointed to prevent the slaves from joining the assembly. On some of these occasions the language of the excluded negroes, who crowded around the doors, was truly pathetic; and it was rendered still more interesting from being accompanied with tears. "Massa, me no go to heaven now."—"White men keep black men from serving God."—"Black man got no soul."—"Nobody teach black man now." Such were the expressions as they hovered around the door, or pensively retired from the interdicted spot. We need not envy

the feelings of those who could hear these pathetic expressions with composed indifference. If ever the words of Sterne had a meaning when he says, "I heard his chains clank, and the iron entered my soul," it must have been on this melancholy occasion.

Dr. Coke had now spent sixteen months in London, waiting the decision of the important question which was before his majesty in council. The eventful moment at length arrived, and brought with it the following letter, which put a final period to the suspense of all:—

"*Whitehall*, 26*th April*, 1809.

"Lord Barthurst presents his compliments to Dr. Coke, and acquaints him that the late act passed in Jamaica, in November, 1807, for the protection, subsisting, clothing, and for the better order and government of slaves, and for other purposes, was this day disallowed by his majesty in council."

An account of this pleasing decision was immediately transmitted to all the Methodist societies throughout the United Kingdom, and to those also in the colonies abroad, that all might partake of the general joy, and feel the paternal care of the sovereign toward his subjects even in the extremity of his empire. On every occasion his present majesty has shown himself an invariable friend to toleration. Our religious rights form our dearest interests; and, from that uniform regard with which they have been protected, both gratitude and interest combine with our fixed principles to ratify our attachment to the throne. Since these days, the laws have been rendered still more explicit in our favour; and, from the manner in which their principles have been supported, we are convinced that those who are at the fountain head of power will not suffer them to be infringed. May the spirit as well as the letter of them be transmitted to generations yet unborn. And may those who feel their genial influence perpetuate that loyalty to their sovereign, and that gratitude to God, which it shall be our endeavour to set before them as an example.

The doors being thus providentially opened for preaching the gospel in every part of Jamaica, except

the town of Kingston, in which place the chapel was still shut by a municipal law, which the repeal of the present edict could not reach, Dr. Coke repaired almost immediately to Ireland. In this voyage both himself and wife were exposed to dangers of the most imminent kind; and they fully expected, from the severity of the weather, to perish before they could reach the shore. Of this tempest he has taken some notice in his papers; and Mrs. Coke, though brought up in an extreme of tenderness, which was calculated to render a delicate constitution still more feeble, has recorded in her journals the fortitude with which she was blessed in these moments of unexampled peril. Confident of the divine favour, and relying upon the protecting arm of God, her soul was resigned to the awful dispensation that seemed to await her, while thus standing on the margin of time, with the solemnities of eternity full in view. This is tranquillity which stoicism may boast, but which nothing less than Christ in us the hope of glory can actually inspire.

Dr. Coke, during this year, published a reply to the Rev. Melville Horne, in vindication of himself and brethren, and of their established views of some important doctrines, from several charges brought against them by that gentleman. But of this work we shall take more notice hereafter. Toward the latter part of this year he also formed and executed the design of sending his works into the world in numbers. The sale of them was extensive; but the expense attending this mode of publication was too extravagant to justify his continuance of the practice. Yet amid all these engagements, his grand business was kept continually in view. The support of the missions was his standing employment; and so far was he successful, after his return from Ireland, that, from the month of September, 1809, to that of the ensuing January, he collected upward of 1,000*l.* while begging from door to door.

It was early in the year 1810, that his attention, and that of all the friends of toleration, was arrested by some propositions of Lord Sidmouth, to introduce a bill into parliament, which, if carried into effect, would have annihilated the itinerant plan of preaching at one stroke.

Anticipating the consequences of this bill, the fears of every religious community were seriously alarmed, especially as its object was left undefined, and its principles were not developed. Dr. Coke, on this occasion, being actuated by that charity which hopeth all things, was not among the foremost to suspect the evil tendency of this bill. And he seems to have been led into this persuasion by the favours which he had previously received when applying for redress to the same party, and by the complaisance of those statesmen to whom he appealed for an explanation of its design.

Thus resting in a degree of security, which the occasion would hardly justify, Dr. Coke, in the month of May, sent the first numbers of his Cottager's Bible into the world; and in July this work was followed by several books and pamphlets of various descriptions. His commentary on the Bible was, however, his standing work. It had already met with an extensive sale, but many copies were still on hand; and the attention of the religious public was arrested by Dr. Adam Clarke's justly celebrated work, which was now announced, and in this year made its appearance in the world.

Anxious to dispose of the copies which remained, and to secure that assistance which the conference had rendered to him in former years, Dr. Coke addressed the following circular letter to each of the superintendents of the various circuits in the Methodist connection, on the occasion:—

"*Bradford, Yorkshire, Feb.* 16, 1810.

"My Dear Brother and Friend,—I think it my duty, in the present circumstances of things, to lay before you the state of my commentary. In the year 1792, the conference requested me to write or compile a commentary on the Bible. When I had so far advanced in the work, that the part finished might be put into the press, my brethren did not judge it proper to enter on so expensive a work, but voted unanimously, that they would undertake to recommend and sell the whole work for me, if I would risk the publication of it; and that they would take only *ten per cent.* commission money for the whole. However, on the representation of our worthy friend Mr. Lomas, I made the commission

money *twenty per cent.*, paying up the arrears, and thereby gave to the book room not less than *a thousand pounds* in all. The conference was pleased to honour me twice with a unanimous vote of thanks for that work.

"I have now about two hundred sets of my commentary on the Old Testament on hand, and about twelve hundred sets of my commentary on the New Testament. I have therefore, I think, a claim to your indulgence, and to your assistance for the sale of the remainder of my edition, prior to that of any other person whatever. I here except every thing that makes a part of your stock in the book room. I would not choose to oppose any person upon earth. But justice, as well as mercy, seems to be in this instance so clearly on my side, that I have no scruple earnestly to entreat the favour of you to assist me in the sale of the remainder of my edition.

"The allowance for commission is now *twenty-five per cent.* The division of this I must leave to you and Mr. Blanshard.

"Whatever worth my commentary may have, you must be acquainted with it. To say any thing on that head would therefore be useless. I must now leave the matter with you, only observing that you will, by complying with my request, greatly oblige, my dear brother and friend,

"Yours affectionately, T. COKE."

The circulation of this letter was not without its influence on the minds of many of the preachers to whom it was sent; but the effects resulting from it were not, on the whole, equal to the writer's expectations. He therefore continued to publish his commentary, together with some other works, in numbers, sending them into the world by men who travelled through the country on purpose. But this was a mode of publication not only too expensive to be pursued, but in which he frequently found himself wronged by the agents whom he employed, without having any means of redress.

It was nearly about this time that a proposition was made by the American Methodists to publish a new edition of his commentary on the continent, and to take

from him the remaining part of his stock, with which he found himself incumbered. To these proposals Dr. Coke was ready to accede; but through some intervening causes, with which the author is not acquainted, this proposition produced nothing but a gleam of hope, leaving him a prey to agents and travellers, who frequently did not sell a sufficient quantity to defray their own expenses.

The author of this biography, from his habits of intimacy with Dr. Coke, was not ignorant of these facts. He therefore frequently adverted to them, and desired him to desist from pursuits which must ultimately waste all his property. Deluded, however, with the specious pretences of his robbers, he was not easily to be moved from his purposes. He was then told that it would be less to his disadvantage to employ a man at the door of his warehouse in London, to give his works to the passengers who walked the streets. But even this expostulation, which was made in September, was at first made in vain. Dr. Coke was convinced of the fact in November, and acknowledged his obligations for information which he had not been previously disposed to receive.

Wearied at length with a mode of publishing his works which common prudence would no longer permit him to pursue, Dr. Coke soon afterward took his numbers from agents who had treated him with injustice, and placed his various publications in the hands of Messrs. Nuttal and Fisher, of Liverpool. But to these he was obliged to allow such a considerable per centage as afforded him but little prospect of reimbursement for the property he had advanced from the surplus that was left. In addition to this, the sale was not equal to the expectations he had been led to entertain; so that this compact continued but for a short season. He therefore, at the ensuing conference, made an offer of all his works, both finished and unfinished, to the Methodist connection, at a price which it was scarcely possible for them to refuse.

His whole stock of literary property at this time, including a warehouse worth 550*l.*, amounted, at the trade price, to 10,000*l.* This he offered for three thousand

guineas, to be paid by regular instalments, in seven years. This generous offer was accepted. But thinking, on calm reflection, that he had been rather too precipitate in his proposal, at his request conference withdrew their claims, and gave him another year to mature his mind on the subject. In this state of suspense his literary concerns lay until the conference of 1812, when the bargain, with some trifling alterations, was fully ratified, and all his works became the property of the Methodist connection.

CHAPTER XVI.

Introduction, progress, and final overthrow of Lord Sidmouth's bill—New interpretation given to the toleration act—New toleration act—Dr. Coke takes a decided part in all—Establishes a mission among the French prisoners—Sends missions to Sierra Leone, in Africa—First introduction of Methodism into that colony—State of the mission--Marries Miss Loxdale—Death and character of that lady—Plans a mission to India—Prepares to embark—Projects the missionary societies—Sanctioned by conference—Provision made for himself and associates—Designs to be married a third time—Connection broken off through the interference of his friends—Sails for India—Death and funeral solemnities of Mrs. Ault—General account of the voyage—Death of Dr. Coke—Particulars relative to this melancholy event—Body committed to the deep—Prosperous state of the mission—Reflections.

Although Dr. Coke, when the reports respecting Lord Sidmouth's bill were first in circulation, entertained no gloomy apprehensions of its issue, he was awakened from his lethargy when its principles began to be unfolded. He then saw the awful consequences to which it would certainly lead in case it passed into a law; and was roused into action to oppose its progress by those constitutional means that were then applied with the most unexampled effect. By the operative influence of this law the Methodists would have been more immediately affected than perhaps any other denomination of Christians in Britain; but all parties felt the meditated infringement on their common rights, and liberty of conscience became one common cause. Against the whole economy of the Methodist discipline

this bill would have militated; and nothing but legal persecution, in all probability, would have immediately followed, as soon as it had passed into a law, which would have filled the jails with thousands of loyal subjects, of various descriptions, whose characters are an ornament to the country that gave them birth.

It was early in the month of May, 1811, when this bill was brought into the house of lords. It was read a first time. Its tendency was then perceived in all its bearings. The kingdom became alarmed; and the public mind was in such a high state of ferment that its supporters began to dread the consequences that would almost inevitably ensue. Petitions from all quarters were instantly called forth with incredible readiness; and, so far as time would permit, they entered the house like an overwhelming torrent.

On the 11th of May this bill was read a second time. But before the arrival of this day nearly seven hundred petitions were thrown on the table against it. These had swarmed from London and its vicinity; and multitudes more were on their way from the various parts of the nation, signed by myriads who breathed the genuine spirit of constitutional opposition to the measure. Alarmed at the formidable spectacle which these petitions presented, and at the sound of popular opinion, which had scarcely ever been heard in such unity before, the advocates of the bill found themselves most seriously oppressed; and hesitated to proceed with a measure that had excited such public aversion. Its opposers triumphed in the embarrassments which no artifice could conceal; and expatiated against the enormity of its principles and consequences in strains of argumentative eloquence that were not to be resisted. The fate of the bill having taken this unexpected turn, many who had hitherto remained silent, but from whom support for its clauses was expected, soon gave way, and the voice of its advocates could no longer be heard with any hope of success. At length it was proposed that its third reading should be postponed until that day six months, which, according to the customs of the house, was a proposition that contained its death warrant. This motion was accordingly put, and carried

without a division, and its destiny was ratified. The petitions therefore were of no farther service than either to hold out to posterity an example how to act on any similar occasion, or to furnish parchment to light the funeral pile of the abortive statute.

Scarcely had the friends of the preceding intolerant bill been defeated, before certain magistrates, who were actuated by the same principles, resorted in various parts of the kingdom to a new expedient. This was to give to the toleration act an intolerant interpretation, and to make it subservient to all the purposes for which the bill of Lord Sidmouth had been designed. This circumstance created no small degree of alarm; and many consultations were held to concert proper measures to prevent that cloud from gathering around the horizon which, from its appearance, threatened all the dissenters and the Methodists with disasters of no common magnitude. In these consultations Dr. Coke was not silent; and his readiness to execute the measures proposed was of considerable service to the general cause. It was finally determined that an appeal should be made to parliament for protection against the unwarrantable interpretations lately put upon that act, which had been invariably understood in a different sense for more than one hundred years. To the prayer of this petition government listened with a favourable ear. A new act was passed in consequence of the application, and those privileges which local authority had endeavoured to curtail, were not only confirmed, but new ones were added to all the former, and religious liberty was solemnly confirmed by the national senate.

Such were, through the overruling providence of God, the consequences which followed Lord Sidmouth's bill. Nothing less could have been expected from its clauses than that the Methodists would be placed under various restrictions, which must have totally disorganized their present economy. This bill was defeated, and a new one of a different tendency substituted in its stead, by which the rights of conscience are guarded against the attempts of all future assailants; and we hope for ever. In these transactions Dr. Coke took a decided but not so active a part as might have been

expected from him, if he had not been compelled to remove to a distant part of the kingdom. Yet, even on this occasion, such was his zeal, his perseverance, and his assiduity, while he had an opportunity of acting, that his name, in conjunction with the names of many others, will be remembered with gratitude when the present generation shall be swept from the face of the earth.

But amid these diversified concerns, which engrossed the time and attention of Dr. Coke, nothing could divert him from the more permanent purpose of his soul, namely, the support and the extension of foreign missions. In these he was actively engaged from the commencement of his public ministry; in these he continued with unabating fervour through the whole period of his probation; and in these he finally terminated his mortal career.

Twenty years had now elapsed since Dr. Coke had visited Paris, with a design to introduce the gospel into that dissolute metropolis. His first efforts had been unsuccessful; and the continuance of the war between Great Britain and France had totally prevented him from renewing his attempt. But the same causes that had shut up all friendly intercourse between the contending nations, had presented to the eye of benevolence many thousands who were at once living without hope, and without God in the world, in the various prisons of this country, which were crowded with the captives of war.

At the English conference of 1809, Mr. Toase, one of the preachers who understood the French language, and spoke it with fluency, was appointed to a circuit on the banks of the Medway. In this river there were ten prison ships, on board of which were 7,000 prisoners of war. While attending to the duties of his circuit, he received an invitation from the captain of one of these ships to come on board and preach to the prisoners. Conceiving it to be a call of Providence, he went, and spent some time in conversing with the prisoners on religious subjects, giving such advice as he thought suitable, and distributing among them some small tracts which he supposed they might be inclined to read. On

introducing the subject of preaching, he promised to visit them on the ensuing day, and to deliver to them a sermon in their own language, upon condition that they would engage to hear. This proposition was accepted with joy, and the invitation was renewed with an almost universal voice.

Mr. Toase, accordingly, on the 6th of March, 1810, took his stand on the quarter deck of this prison ship, (the Glory,) and preached to several hundreds, who listened with much attention, and some among them with tears of apparent contrition. At the conclusion of the service, the prisoners expressed much gratitude, and solicited a continuance of the favour which he had thus conferred. With this request he promised to comply, so far as the duties of his circuit would allow; and in all his subsequent visits their behaviour was much better than might have been expected from men of their character, and in their condition. This was the origin of the Methodist missions among the French prisoners.

At the conference of 1810, although Mr. Toase had not been able to preach on board the Glory more than once in three weeks, the prisoners presented a petition, signed by about fifty names, chiefly officers, requesting his reappointment, with which request conference complied. On returning to the Glory, he was received with every mark of approbation and respect; and a wish was expressed by them, that some Bibles and Testaments might be put into circulation among those who could read. This was done; and to these were added various other books, the whole of which were preserved with care, and read with attention.

Among those who had regularly attended preaching, and were apparently benefited by the word, some few were taken ill. These were removed to another ship called the *Trusty*, which was used as a hospital ship. Mr. Toase visited them during their illness, and thus had an opportunity of making himself known to some belonging to almost all the prison ships in the river, especially as he preached on board this ship once every week for some time. "It is truly affecting," says Mr. Toase, "on these occasions, to see those who are able to walk, assemble around the beds of such as cannot be

raised, while I stand in the centre, and offer them the glad tidings of salvation. The last time I was with them, I was much affected with the appearance of one, who wept nearly the whole time of the sermon."

The attachment of the prisoners to preaching on board of these ships, was soon communicated to those of others, and these became animated with a similar desire. This desire awakened the solicitude of Mr. Toase, and presented a field which required more labourers; but these could not be procured without much expense, nor be fully sanctioned until the conference of 1811. In addition to this, there was an obstacle in the way, which it was necessary to remove, in order that the missionaries might have free access to the prisoners on all occasions. To accomplish this end, an application was made to the executive government of the country. This was immediately answered in the most liberal manner; and, on the arrival of this order, to permit the Methodist missionaries to preach, the commissary general, and all the officers, concurred in the benevolent measure, and declared themselves ready to promote the compassionate design. Nor was this order confined to the prison ships in the Medway. In its extended application, it embraced the various depots throughout the kingdom, in which about 70,000 men were at this time confined; so that from this providential beginning an opening presented itself, which, in its effects and consequences, in relation to the empire of France, baffled all calculation.

At the conference of 1811, the measure of sending missionaries among the prisoners was taken into consideration. Its propriety was readily admitted; but an inability to support the missionaries was an objection which the timid were not able to overcome. But Dr. Coke was not to be alarmed with dangers to which he had been so long accustomed. He was acquainted with the resources he had before him, and his confidence was strong in the divine protection. He therefore, in order to silence all objections, offered to become responsible for the whole amount, relying only on divine Providence and the liberality of the humane and generous public for reimbursement. This was the principle on which the

missionaries among the French prisoners were established in the year 1811.

From the Medway this mission extended to Portsmouth, to Stapleton, to Norman-cross, to Plymouth, and to Dartmoor; and in most of these places the prospects were highly pleasing, and in some the consequences were evidently beneficial. It would be easy to recount various expressions of gratitude which the missionaries received from the prisoners, and to notice the marks of affection displayed by them when they took their leave in cartels during the war. Many of these have been recorded in the missionary reports for the years 1811, 1812, and 1813. But, above all these, the serious impressions which were apparent on the minds of many, and which continued during the period of their confinement, afforded evidence, by the effects resulting from them, that this mission had not been undertaken in vain.

As this mission could only be considered as in a state of infancy, at the conclusion of the war, it is impossible to say to what extent its advantages might have been carried in the issue of its continuance. God, whose prerogative it is to bring good out of evil, might have made war instrumental in establishing his kingdom of spiritual peace, and have raised from among its captives some heralds to proclaim the everlasting gospel. But evil is not necessary for the accomplishment of any thing that is good. The seed that has been already sown may be even at this moment bearing fruit, and another generation may reap a glorious harvest which is now preparing. Many Bibles have been sent home by these released prisoners; and it is not improbable that they will continue to be prized and cherished by them, from the singular circumstance of their having been given by strangers, while they were captives in a foreign land. This veneration may be transmitted to their posterity, who may also inherit their affection for Protestants and for the Protestant cause.

But on the issues of mere possibility it is in vain to speculate. To follow the leadings of Providence is a branch of duty from which it is criminal to depart. A conviction of this truth always rested on Dr. Coke's

mind. On this principle he took upon himself the responsibility of this mission, and cheerfully added his endeavours to provide for its support to all his other accumulated labours; being fully convinced that his labour would not be finally in vain in the Lord.

Europe and America had hitherto engaged most of the active exertions of Dr. Coke; but these quarters of the globe had not exclusively engrossed his thoughts. He had frequently reflected on the forlorn condition of the Africans in their native land; and although he had been unsuccessful in one effort, he had long resolved to make another, as soon as circumstances would allow. The abolition of the slave trade, the establishment of the colony at Sierra Leone, and the pressing invitations of some Methodists who resided there, conspired to point out this as a favourable spot; and the year 1811 was a time that harmonized with these pleasing occurrences.

It is a question which has frequently been asked, "What was the primary occasion that led to the introduction of Methodism into this African colony, as no missionaries were ever sent thither until the year 1811?" To this question it may not be improper to give a brief reply.

It has been stated in an early part of this volume that, at the conclusion of the American war, a great number of refugees were compelled to retire from the United States, in consequence of their attachment to England, and to take up their abode in Nova Scotia, which still belonged to the British territories. Among these were many who had been slaves in the United States; but who, as a reward for their services to the British cause, were carried to Nova Scotia and declared free. Prior to the commencement of hostilities, several of these had been savingly converted to God, through the preaching of the early missionaries who visited the continent. Surviving the horrors of war, they had retained their steadfastness, and they fondly cherished a strong attachment to the doctrines and discipline of the Methodists, when they could no longer hear preaching, or meet in any society but among themselves. It was in behalf of these liberated slaves, in conjunction with

other refugees, that Dr. Coke so strongly interested himself on his early visits to America. It was to these also he was directing his course, in company with other missionaries, when the providence of God compelled them to take refuge in the island of Antigua, in the year 1786.

After these liberated negroes had continued in Nova Scotia some time, it was found that they were unable to bear the rigours of the climate during the severity of winter. Freetown, in Sierra Leone, was at this time in building, and assistance was much wanted to carry on the work. They were, therefore, in the year 1792, to the amount of 1131, taken from Nova Scotia, and carried to Sierra Leone, as a climate more congenial to their constitutions.

Arriving at this colony, they found themselves at liberty to worship God agreeably to the dictates of their own consciences; while those in power stimulated them to the practice of every moral and social virtue. Thus circumstanced, they established the worship of God among themselves, according to the plan of the Methodists, and earnestly invited others to join them. At this time two or three officiated as preachers, and a few others took the care of the little classes they had formed. As their lives were exemplary, and their preaching regular, though plain, their congregations soon increased, and several new members augmented the original society. And so far was God pleased to bless their simple but sincere endeavours to promote his glory, that they were preserved through succeeding years as lights in a benighted land.

These pious negroes, though fixed in a distant portion of the globe, never forgot that they had friends both in England and America, whose spirits and views were congenial with their own. With these they opened a correspondence, through the vessels which occasionally touched at the colony, and transmitted accounts of the manner in which they proceeded. In process of time they contrived to build a preaching house, which, we have since been informed, was sufficient to contain about four hundred persons.

During the lapse of nineteen years, Dr. Coke received

many letters from them, requesting him to send over a missionary to the colony to second their exertions, and to instruct them more fully in the way of righteousness. Of these requests he never lost sight. But the continuance of the slave trade, and the difficulty of procuring missionaries who were both able and willing to undertake this arduous work, presented obstacles which could not be overcome until the year 1811. At this time four men, Messrs. Warren, Hayley, Reyner, and Hurst, offered themselves as volunteers for this perilous undertaking.

These men sailed from Liverpool on the 21st of September, 1811, and reached the colony in safety on the 12th of November following. The objects which they had primarily in view were to establish schools among the Africans, on the plan of Mr. Lancaster, and to preach the gospel to all who were disposed to hear. On their arrival, they were treated with much respect by the governor, and received with all the ardour of affection by the society that had long waited their arrival. Success for some time attended their exertions. Many heard the gospel with much attention, and the children made a considerable proficiency in their learning. Mr. Warren, however, was, after some months, taken from them by death, and a considerable time elapsed before another could be procured to fill his place. During this interim their prospects were rather gloomy, in consequence of the derangement which his death occasioned. The schools still went on; and so far have they been deemed beneficial to the colony, that the governor has since taken them under his protection, and they still continue prosperous.

Since the death of Mr. Warren, another missionary has gone to Sierra Leone, to superintend those who remain, and to gather the scattered flock. From the last returns, the number in society amounted to 120: but little doubt can be entertained, when he becomes established among them, that many will return who had wandered from the fold during this dark and dreary night, through which they had been obliged to pass.

It is to the particular exertions of Dr. Coke that this mission, under God, is indebted for its existence. When

the design which he had formed to establish it was laid before conference, the same fears presented themselves in a formidable magnitude that had operated on former occasions. But Dr. Coke had been too long accustomed to opposition to abandon his undertaking from pecuniary considerations, merely because it was not so fortunate as to meet with unanimous concurrence. Possessing the means of carrying his intentions into effect, and being actuated by a principle not less liberal than those means were commanding, he took upon himself the responsibility of the principal part of the first expense. The total sum at this time, though it was considerably augmented afterward, amounted to 1100*l.*, out of which Dr. Coke advanced 600*l.* from his own personal property. But money with him was of little consideration when a mission was to be either established or supported, which promised to bring glory to God, and to promote the happiness of the human race. To urge him to any missionary undertaking nothing more was necessary than to convince him of these facts. When this was done, decision became prominent in his character; his fears were dismissed; and with a degree of confidence in God which no common tempest could shake, he proceeded onward in the path of duty; and, through dint of perseverance, rarely failed to accomplish purposes which at first view appeared visionary and romantic. But Dr. Coke is dead: and in these departments we know not where his successor lives.

It is a question which has sometimes been agitated among the curious, whether a man, by marrying a second wife, pays, by so doing, a compliment to his first, or throws a delicate reflection on her character. Speculative men may advance plausible arguments on each side that will keep decision for some time in suspense; and perhaps nothing can be finally inferred from the result that will establish a permanent principle. But, whatever may have been the opinions of theorists, no one who ever witnessed the connubial tenderness which existed between Dr. Coke and his first wife, will question his motive in taking a second.

Mrs. Penelope Coke departed this life on the 25th of January, 1811, and her widowed husband wandered from

place to place nearly the whole year, bewailing his condition with that manly sorrow which the gospel tolerates when it is accompanied with resignation and hope. The charms, however, which, in the early part of his life, he had found in solitude, were not now the companions of his solitary state. During six years he had exchanged them for the pleasures of social intercourse; and the favourable impressions which the endearing society of his pious partner had made, were too indelible to be effaced.

To supply this deficiency which death had made in his domestic comforts—to fill a vacancy which furnished a grave to his earthly joys—and to procure a friend to whom he could unbosom all his cares, and from whom he might receive the balm of friendship through the decline of life, he sought after another object, at once worthy of his affection, his confidence, and his character. This assemblage of excellences he found in Miss Ann Loxdale, an elderly maiden lady, who resided in Liverpool.

Miss Loxdale had been of long standing in the Methodist connection; she had frequently corresponded with Mr. Wesley; and her praise was in all the churches. Her acquirements were numerous; and her understanding, which was naturally vigorous and comphehensive, had received from education a degree of polish which always shed a lustre around her. Her piety was of the most exalted kind; and her usefulness in visiting the sick, in leading classes, in consoling the disconsolate, and in reproving those who went astray, might serve as a model not unworthy of imitation by Christians of no common attainments.

But, notwithstanding this constellation of graces and natural excellences, her health was rather too precarious, and her habits of life too much domesticated, to render her a suitable companion for Dr. Coke, who had no certain dwelling. On this account her friends, who fill some very respectable walks in life, disapproved of the connection she was about to form. Dr. Coke's confidential correspondents, who were made acquainted with her intentions, were decidedly of the same opinion; so that both parties made use of every endeavour to

prevent their meditated union. But no dissuasions were sufficient to deter them from accomplishing their mutual engagements; both being fully satisfied of each other's piety, and actuated by one common principle, to diffuse religion and virtue through the world by their precepts and their example. They were accordingly married in the month of December, 1811, and proceeded to the accomplishment of their purposes in the full enjoyment of that connubial felicity which their judgments, their friendship, and their affection had taught them to anticipate.

But Dr. Coke had once more to learn that all sublunary happiness is precarious; and that sorrow, in every department of life, is the constant companion of mortality. This amiable woman was taken from him just as one year after their marriage had completed its revolution. She died at York, on the 5th of December, 1812, and was buried by the side of his former wife, in their family vault at Brecon. With their ashes it was his full determination to mingle his own, whenever death should terminate his mortal career, even if this should happen in a remote region of the globe. But with this desire, as we shall shortly discover, it was totally impossible for his friends to comply.

Cherishing in his bosom a recollection of her name and of her numerous virtues, while on his voyage toward India he transmitted to the author of this volume a copy of the following epitaph, in which he intended to embalm her memory. The letter in which this epitaph was enclosed was dated off Madeira, January 22d, 1814; but, being sent by a ship bound for the Brazils, it did not reach England until the body of the writer had been consigned to the remorseless deep, to demand from another "the generous tear he paid."

To record the memory of
Mrs. ANN COKE,
Daughter of JOSEPH LOXDALE, Esq.,
of Shrewsbury, in the county of Salop,
and late Wife of the Reverend THOMAS COKE,
Doctor of Laws, of the University of Oxford,
and Common Council-man
of this Borough,
This Marble is erected
By her affectionate Husband.

Her mental endowments,
though highly polished by education,
were ornamented with the deepest Humility,
which would have rendered her amiable
without her superior Talents.
Her Conversion to God, at an early period,
taught her,
by the manner of its accomplishment,
to ascribe her Salvation wholly to Grace
and induced her
to exchange the pleasures of the world
for
the permanent enjoyments of Religion.
Upward of thirty years
She continued her connection
with the METHODISTS,
to whom she united herself,
from an attachment
which death only could dissolve.
Among these may be found
many Witnesses
of her eminent CHRISTIAN virtues,
as well as abundant monuments
of her holy zeal for the Salvation of Souls.
Having long experienced that state of
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION
which it is the privilege
of the Faithful to enjoy.
Her love toward God
became so refined as she advanced in years,
that her removal from earth to Heaven
was little more than a gentle transition.
She met Death with holy
and perfect resignation,
leaving this world
in the full assurance of a better,
on the 5th of December, 1812,
in the 57th year of her age.

Deprived of this only earthly solace of his declining years by the hand of death, within about twelve months after she had become his wife, Dr. Coke, at the commencement of 1813, made a solemn pause, while verging toward the extremity of life; and, from an insulated eminence, surveyed, in successive order, those portions of his existence which were gone, and anticipated those fleeting moments which seemed yet to await him.

He had lived to behold missions established in Ireland; in Wales; in the uncultivated parts of England; in America; in the West Indies; at Gibraltar; and at Sierra Leone. In all these places he had seen prosperity attend the word which he had thus been made instrumental in planting. These, therefore, no longer required that fostering care which their infant state had rendered necessary; and, consequently, he found himself somewhat free from those calls of duty which, on former occasions, were too imperious to be resisted.

From his various publications he was also disengaged, by having transferred the whole to conference. Of both wives he had likewise been deprived by the inscrutable dispensations of Heaven, so that he was again free to enter upon any new enterprise that might promise to enlarge the boundaries of Zion. These considerations, in their combined effect, awakened within him a latent desire, which had long slumbered in his bosom, to turn his thoughts toward the shores of India.

In the early part of his life Dr. Coke had considered India as a region which afforded an ample field for missionary exertions; and in the year 1784 he had actually written a letter to a gentleman in India, to make inquiries into the state of morals, the influence of idolatry, the difficulties to be encountered, the probable amount of expense, the prospect of success, and the best plan of procedure, in case the establishment of a mission were attempted in Asia. To these inquiries, and to a variety of others closely connected with this general question, he received a very long, very full, and an accurately detailed account, in a letter, dated February 19th, 1785. This letter may be found in the Arminian Magazine for the year 1792.

The difficulties which this letter faithfully recorded

were too formidable to be at that time encountered. And as those places in which missions have since been established presented a more promising field, the concerns of Asia were postponed until finance, ability, and leisure should combine to mark the expediency of the arduous enterprise. Engaged in these missions, the intermediate years which passed away left no surplus either of time, of money, or of talent, to justify an undertaking of such magnitude. Nor was it until the year 1813, when those circumstances united together which have been enumerated, that Dr. Coke thought the period was fully come.

But although nothing was done toward the establishment of a mission in India till this time, it was a subject that had frequently engrossed his thoughts. On every occasion that presented itself he seized the opportunity to promote inquiries, thus continually augmenting his stock of information, which was treasured up against the anticipated but distant result. In the year 1806, Dr. Coke, being at the house of a pious gentleman in Cornwall, who had resided upward of twenty years in India, unfolded to him the designs which were then ripening in his mind. From this gentleman (Colonel William Sandys) he procured a fund of information, with which he was so highly pleased, that he requested him to state what he had communicated to the missionary committee in London, to prepare them for that work which he fully expected he should one day undertake. A statement was accordingly given to the committee by Colonel Sandys, a copy of which is now before the author; and it is evident, from comparing its recommendations with the facts furnished by the mission when fitted out, that its principles were not without their influence in the arrangements which were finally made.

In the year 1813, when his resolution to visit India was nearly formed, Dr. Coke opened a correspondence with the late Dr. Buchanan, whose valuable researches in India have made the Christian world his debtor. From this gentleman he also received much additional information, as well as a confirmation of what he had previously received from other quarters, particularly

from Colonel Sandys, Dr. Buchanan's intimate friend, correspondent, and relative. It was through Dr. Buchanan that his views were more immediately directed toward the island of Ceylon, the obstacles there being fewer in number, and less in magnitude, than those which must have been encountered in case he had thought of entering immediately among the Hindoos. This was recommended as a preparatory step, that might enable him and his associates to acquire more particular knowledge of the continent, to which the missionaries might repair hereafter, when they had fully established themselves in Ceylon, where part of the inhabitants, not wholly ignorant of Christianity, might be addressed in the languages of Europe.

Convinced by the representations of Dr. Buchanan, Dr. Coke now fully fixed his mind on a mission to Asia, and considered Ceylon as the grand point to which his views should be primarily directed. To a letter, in which the author of this work endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose of visiting India, on account of his age; the shock which his constitution must sustain by a long residence in the torrid zone; the difficulty of rendering the organs of articulation sufficiently flexible at this time of life to enable him to pronounce a new language; and finally, his inability to leave behind him a successor that should be at once able and willing to beg from door to door, to support the missions already established, he wrote the following reply:—

"*Preaching house, Dublin, June* 28, 1813.

"My Very Dear Friend,—I beg pardon for being so long answering your letter. I have laboured in the begging way since the last conference, more arduously than ever, except about a month or six weeks, when I swam in waves of wo on account of my late precious wife.

"I am now dead to Europe, and alive for India. God himself has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon.' I am as much convinced of the will of God in this respect as that I breathe; so fully convinced, that methinks I had rather be set naked on the coast of Ceylon, without clothes, and without a friend, than not go there. The Portuguese language is much spoken all around the coast of

Ceylon, and indeed all along the coast of India. According to Dr. Buchanan, there are 500,000 Christians (nominal Christians at least) in Ceylon: and there are now only two ministers to take care of them. I am learning the Portuguese language continually, and am perfectly certain I shall conquer it before I land in Ceylon. The fleets sail in October and January. If the conference employ me to raise the money for the outset, I shall not be able to sail till January. I shall bear my own expenses of course. I'll request you to speak to the preachers, to see whether a preacher or two can be procured, who will consent to travel with me. I shall probably be here until this day fortnight, then I set off for Liverpool."

It is plain from the preceding extract, that Dr. Coke had not, in the month of June, procured any associates to engage with him in this important mission. It is also to be inferred, from the manner of his expressions, that it was his design to embark for Asia, if no one could be found to accompany him thither. We cannot, however, suppose, under such circumstances, that it was his intention to remain in India alone. He might have gone thither to make observations on the spot, that, on returning to England, he might be better able to judge of the number and qualifications of such missionaries as should afterward be induced to embark.

Prior to this time, he had taken into his serious consideration the state to which the missions, on his leaving England, would be reduced for want of pecuniary assistance. This was a subject which frequently occupied his thoughts, from the first moment that he had recently turned his attention toward Asia. To provide for their support, even during his absence, and in case of his decease, whether at home or abroad, he had projected the plan of establishing missionary societies throughout the kingdom, and had calculated upon the practicability and utility of the measure some time before any attempts were made to carry the plan into actual effect. It is not probable that he had anticipated the benefits which have already resulted from the institution in all their extent; but that he had contemplated the design with

the most ardent pleasure, his own handwriting, now in the author's possession, furnishes a decisive proof.

At the conference of 1813, which was held at Liverpool, Dr. Coke introduced his design to visit India, stating at large the providential concurrence of circumstances which had appeared, the favourable disposition which some men in power had manifested toward the mission, and the reasons which had finally led him to visit the eastern regions of the globe. At the same time he introduced to the conference six men whom he had procured to accompany him, and share in his toils. Of these volunteers in the cause of God, James Lynch, William Ault, George Erskine, William M. Harvard, and Thomas Squance were already travelling preachers, and to these were added two approved local preachers, whose names were Benjamin Clough and John M'Kenny.

The connection at this conference being deeply involved in debt, Dr. Coke was well aware that the old objection, which he had for many years been compelled to encounter, and occasionally to stifle with an act of generosity, would again be raised. And it seemed probable, from the embarrassments which existed, that his design to visit India would be wholly defeated, unless he could find some decisive method to impose silence upon the tongue of opposition, so far as pecuniary assistance and domestic claims were engaged in the issue. To meet this he boldly and generously offered to bear, from his own private fortune, the whole expense of the outfit, to the amount of six thousand pounds, if that sum should be thought necessary.

The preachers assembled in conference, who could not but approve of the measure, even while they doubted the ability of the connection to bear the expense of this additional mission, were awed into silence at this noble act of unexampled generosity. It was therefore finally determined that a mission, under the superintendence of Dr. Coke, should repair to Asia, that the seven missionaries proposed should be accepted, that 3,291*l.* should be borrowed of Dr. Coke, to be reimbursed, and that such assistance should be immediately rendered to the noble undertaking as their circumstances would allow. It was furthermore resolved that, in the distri-

bution of their labours, one of these should remain at the Cape of Good Hope, three should settle in Ceylon, one should repair to Java, and the other two should travel with Dr. Coke, in such places and in such ways as his judgment, and existing circumstances, might direct. Such was the determination of conference; but subsequent events rendered some alterations in these arrangements necessary.

Affairs having proceeded thus far, Dr. Coke, soon after conference, repaired to London with his associate missionaries, to make arrangements and serious preparations for their departure. His first care was to procure an able tutor, who could fully instruct them in the Portuguese language, so far as their time would allow, and furnish them with directions to complete their knowledge in its idiom and pronunciation during their voyage. With a large assortment of clothes, books, and other articles necessary for their comfort, during their intended residence in the regions they were about to visit, they were fully provided. In addition to this, Mr. Harvard and Mr. Squance, being acquainted with the printing business, a printing press, with its various appendages, together with types and the necessary apparatus, was likewise purchased, and united to the general stock. For these various articles an ample allowance was made by conference; but that nothing might be wanting to their accommodations in a foreign land, their stores were additionally augmented by the bounty of Dr. Coke.

Among the missionaries who were now prepared to embark, Mr. Ault and Mr. Harvard were married; and their wives had engaged to accompany them into the eastern hemisphere. Dr. Coke, who was at this time a widower, had felt the inconveniences of his solitary condition, even while residing in his native land. These, he conceived, would be greatly augmented when, in a foreign country, he should be removed from the solaces which civilized life and European manners afforded. Possessed of property that was amply sufficient to support himself and a partner who might be willing to enter into his views, and travel with him in India, he once more turned his thoughts toward the marriage state. Piety, zeal, activity, an enterprising spirit, and a pleasing

address, joined to a suitable age, were the primary qualifications which he sought. This assemblage of excellences he found, or thought he had found, in a lady, who through a train of previous circumstances had presented herself to his notice. His proposals of marriage to her were accepted. But, prior to their union, a knowledge of his intention reaching some of his friends, who thought the connection he was about to form rather improper, they interfered, and, by their persevering remonstrances, ultimately frustrated his design.

Dr. Coke and his companions continued in London, attentively studying the Portuguese language, and making other arrangements for their departure, until the 10th of December, when they found it necessary to repair to Portsmouth, to be in readiness to embark, as they had taken their passage on board of two ships belonging to the fleet; the Lady Melville, commanded by Captain Lochner; and the Cabalva, commanded by Captain Birch. Dr. Coke, with Mr. Harvard, his wife, and Mr. Clough, were stationed in the latter, and all the others in the former. It certainly would have been desirable, if they could all have embarked in one ship, but neither the Lady Melville nor the Cabalva could receive them without incommoding other passengers; and to have taken another ship, in which all could be accommodated, would have cost them an additional sum of 900*l.* for their passage.

They continued at Portsmouth until the 30th, when, taking leave of their affectionate and hospitable friends on shore, and of each other, the parties separated to meet no more, till they greet each other in the world of spirits. Very early the next morning they weighed anchor, and put to sea under the influence of a favourable breeze, and amid the prayers of the pious, who witnessed their final departure from their native shores. "Our fleet," says Dr. Coke, "when we set sail, consisted of a line of battle ship, of 74 guns, two frigates, a sloop of war, six regular Indiamen, two country Indiamen (ships built in India) and about twenty-five smaller merchantmen." Several of these merchantmen were bound for different parts of the world, and only sailed in

company to certain latitudes, to avail themselves of the protection which the convoy afforded.

The Cabalva contained about five hundred souls. Of these, two hundred were soldiers, about fifty were Lascars, and twenty-six, including passengers, the captain, and his officers, occupied the cabin. Strictly attentive to every remarkable event that occurred, Dr. Coke kept a regular journal, which, from the time of their departure down to the 21st of February, 1814, has been transmitted to England. It is not unlikely that he continued this journal from February till the time of his death, but of this no account has been received.

On Saturday, January 1, 1814, they proceeded down the channel, but finding the winds variable, their progress was rather slow. During the following day, they hovered on the coast of Cornwall, and rather expected that they should put into Falmouth harbour, toward which the commodore directed their course. But on receiving from the shore those despatches which he wanted, their fleet was turned toward the ocean, and about eight at night they bade a long farewell to the Lizard lighthouse. On the 4th, they entered the Bay of Biscay, and were exposed to storms with but little intermission until the 24th. During these gales several ships were separated from the fleet, some of which had sustained considerable damage ; and one of the frigates was ordered to go in pursuit of them, and wait to conduct them on their voyage.

On the 9th of February, Mrs. Ault, who had been much indisposed before she embarked, and who was assured by a physician that a voyage into some part of the torrid zone was the only probable means of preserving her life, bade adieu to the present world, with a strong confidence in God, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and a calm resignation to his divine will. On the following day her body was committed to the deep, in latitude 3 deg. 14 min. north, and longitude 22 deg. 10 min. west, there to wait till the sea shall yield up her dead. Previous to her death she was sensible of her approaching dissolution. But instead of expressing any desire to be carried to India to be interred, she requested that her mortal remains might be deposited in the ocean.

This was accordingly done, accompanied with a solemn ceremony, which Dr. Coke, from on board the Cabalva, thus describes:—

"February 10.—As we were all at breakfast, an officer of our ship came in, and informed us that several ships had hoisted their flag half-mast high, as a signal of death. Our signal was immediately hoisted; while our whole company, who had previously known of Mrs. Ault's illness, concluded that the signals were raised on account of her death. This proved to be the case. The signals all continued half-mast high, till about half an hour before sunset, when the Lady Melville lifted up her death signal top-mast high, which was followed by all the fleet. This was a signal that the officiating minister (who was Mr. Squance) had begun to read the 15th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. And when the Lady Melville dropped her signal, the rest of the fleet followed her example, and thus ended the ceremony."

On the 5th of March, Mr. Squance, being unwell, came, at Dr. Coke's particular desire, on board the Cabalva, where he continued until the 15th of April, when he returned in nearly the same state of health. About the 20th, they passed the Cape of Good Hope, but the fleet did not touch at this southern extremity of the continent. The commodore only visited Table Bay, taking with him such letters as the passengers were disposed to forward to England from this port.

In passing the Cape they were exposed to violent storms, during which, and through the voyage, several sailors fell overboard, and were drowned; the severity of the weather preventing those on board from rendering them any assistance. On the 20th of April, during a brisk gale, a sailor on board the Lady Melville fell down the hatchway, and fractured his skull. Another fell overboard from the Neptune, and was drowned. And another from the maintopmast of the Elphinstone fell into the sea, and met with a similar fate.

On the 23d they passed the Island of Bourbon, and though about twelve leagues from the shore, they distinctly saw, with the naked eye, the flames issuing from a volcano. Sometimes the blaze appeared stationary

for a short season; and then, as the mountain was high, it resembled a comet shining in the distant heavens. At other times, the eye was arrested by a stream of fire, moving with inconceivable velocity in sportive corruscations, and occasionally changing in its various hues, from gleams of brilliancy to a dismal and lurid gloom. On the 24th tehy passed the Isle of France; and on the 27th they were within five miles of the little Isle of Gallega, yet no soundings could be found with a line of fifty fathoms.

But they were now brought to the margin of an event which was of too much magnitude, and was too deeply interesting to all the missionaries, to allow them time to make observations on any thing besides. This event was nothing less than the sudden and unexpected death of Dr. Coke. Cheerful, and animated with the mission which now was full in prospect before him, he had enjoyed a good share of health during all the former part of their voyage. And instead of having any presentiment of his death, he was ready, on most occasions, to comfort those whose spirits sunk under the violence of continued storms. Even to the last day of his life his exertions in his study were unremitted, to prepare himself for those missionary labours on which he had already entered, and of which he beheld the happy effects by a pleasing anticipation. But his work was done; and his days were brought to an end, like a tale that is told.

On the first of May, he just hinted that he found himself somewhat indisposed, but his complaint was of so trifling a nature that neither himself nor his companions viewed it in any serious light. On the 2d of May he continued much the same; his indisposition was not wholly removed, but he did not perceive it to increase. He conversed as usual, and walked the deck at his accustomed hour. In the evening, as he was about to retire to rest, he requested Mr. Clough to give him from their chest a little opening medicine. With this request Mr. Clough instantly complied, offering at the same time to sit up with him during the night. But this offer was refused by Dr. Coke, who did not think himself so much indisposed as to render such attention necessary.

He, therefore, on retiring to rest, took his fellow missionaries by the hand, and, in his usual manner, commended them to God. This was the last time his voice was ever heard.

To improve his moments to the utmost, it had been his constant practice, while on board, to rise every morning at half past five; and to prevent him from sleeping beyond his accustomed time, the servant, who attended him, had received orders to call him from his bed at the appointed hour. On the morning of the 3d of May the servant knocked, as usual, at his cabin door. But after several efforts, being unable to procure any reply, he ventured to open the door. This being done, he discovered, to his utter astonishment, the mortal remains of Dr. Coke, lifeless, cold, and nearly stiff, stretched upon the cabin floor.

The servant, on making this discovery, hastened to the apartment of Captain Birch, making him first acquainted with the melancholy tidings. Captain Birch, on hearing of the event, immediately sent for Mr. Clough, and communicated to him the awful information. Mr. Clough instantly hastened to Mr. Harvard, and imparted to him the tale of wo. Both then proceeded to the cabin of Dr. Coke, and saw that the catastrophe, which they would gladly have disbelieved, was mournfully true.

The corpse by this time had been taken from the floor, and laid on the bed; but from the placidity which rested on the countenance it did not seem to have been agitated by any convulsive throes. The head appeared to be a little turned toward one shoulder; but with this exception, no distortion whatever was visible. As soon as the agitation, which the sudden shock had occasioned, had a little subsided, they requested the surgeon of the ship to examine the body. With this request he readily complied; and the result of his examination was, the probability that his death was occasioned by a fit of apoplexy, to which, from the make of his body, and the nature of his constitution, he appeared to have been somewhat predisposed. But of this fact no satisfactory evidence can be either expected or obtained, as he died suddenly and alone.

It was supposed by those on board that he must have risen from his bed, either to procure something that was not within his reach, or to call assistance, as he found his indisposition to increase; but that the stroke coming suddenly on him with irresistible violence, he fell immediately on the floor, and instantly expired in that position in which he was found by the servant. It is furthermore presumed that his death must have happened about midnight. If it had been much earlier, his fall must have been heard by some in the adjoining cabins, who had not retired long to rest; and if it had been later, his body could not have been stiff and cold. Divided from his cabin only by a thin wainscot partition were the cabins of Captain Birch and Mr. Harvard; but as neither of these heard the least noise from his apartment, it is fairly to be presumed that he expired without a struggle or a groan.

As the Lady Melville was at no great distance, and the weather was serene, Captain Birch kindly offered to Messrs. Harvard and Clough a boat, to transmit the melancholy tidings to the missionaries on board that ship. A note was accordingly written by Mr. Harvard to the brethren on board, and another from Captain Birch to Captain Lochner, stating the awful fact, and requesting the missionaries to hasten to the Cabalva, and join in the mournful consultation. On receiving their note the missionaries gazed on each other in speechless amazement, scarcely presuming to credit the intelligence which its lines had imparted, or to believe the evidence of their eyes. They were, however, soon roused from this natural delirium by the surgeon of the Lady Melville, who entered their cabin with the note of Captain Birch to Captain Lochner in his hand, announcing to them with unquestionable certainty that Dr. Coke was actually dead.

Expiring hope being now deprived of every subterfuge, the mournful band repaired on board to mingle their tears with those who were already weeping there. Their first meeting was rather speechless than silent; and the sensations of their bosoms at the sight of each other no language can fully express. Their own situation was now rendered truly forlorn: but the tide of

sorrow, on which they were borne by their present calamity, swallowed up every other consideration, thus leaving to them no room for reflections on their private concerns.

When the first transports of their grief had somewhat subsided, they held a consultation together to contrive in what manner they might preserve the body; and, in compliance with Dr. Coke's will, restore it to England, that it might be interred at Brecon with his wives. But as nothing could be done without the concurrence of Captain Birch, they agreed to wait on him, and state the particular wish which their deceased father in the Lord had frequently expressed. Messrs. Ault and Clough undertook this task, and, on being introduced, communicated their message. To every thing they urged he paid the most scrupulous attention, and expressed his earnest desire to comply with their wishes, so far as prudence and propriety would admit. But, on the present occasion, he thought the difficulties against preserving the body to be so numerous and so formidable, that their request amounted to little less than a moral impossibility.

Being disappointed in their hopes, in the same proportion that they were convinced by his arguments, Messrs. Ault and Clough then withdrew, to communicate to their associates in sorrow the observations which Captain Birch had made. A consultation was immediately held; and, after deliberately weighing all that had been and might be urged on both sides, they finally concluded that it would be prudent to submit to the captain's opinion, and suffer the body of Dr. Coke to be committed to the deep.

On communicating this reluctant acquiescence to the captain, he seemed highly pleased with their determination, and requested them to pursue any plan they might think proper in celebrating his funeral solemnities. But as this was a point on which they had not deliberated, it became necessary for them again to withdraw to hold another consultation. Their ship was now within about two degrees of the equator, and the intenseness of the heat rendered it improper for them to preserve the body, which would soon become putrid

in a cabin, contiguous to which several passengers must sleep. It was therefore resolved that his obsequies should take place on the evening of the same day.

Before they had communicated this intention to the captain, he sent them a polite note, requesting to know how they meant to proceed; and at the same time expressed his desire "to show every token of respect to the memory of so worthy and excellent a man." He was soon made acquainted with their determination; and approving of the measures they intended to pursue, every thing was got ready with all prudent expedition, to the entire satisfaction of all the officers and passengers on board. The funeral rites were conducted in the following manner:—

The carpenters employed made a large, thick, deal coffin, leaving, as usual on such occasions, holes in the bottom, that the air being expressed by the entrance of the water, might not prevent the body from sinking. In this coffin the body was decently laid; and, to accelerate its descent, four cannon balls, tied up in four bags, were introduced, two at the head and two at the feet of the corpse. The cover being nailed down, the coffin was brought upon deck a little before five o'clock, and laid on the leeward gangway, on the starboard side, where it remained for some time, covered over with signal flags. The awning being spread, the soldiers were drawn up in rank on deck, when the tolling of the ship's bell called together the passengers and crew, so that the deck was quite crowded with solemn and silent spectators, who seemed much affected with the scene of mortality they were then called to witness. Mr. Harvard then read the burial service, and the body was consigned to its watery grave in silent solemnity, to be seen no more till "the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible."

The funeral service being concluded, Mr. Ault, before the people retired, delivered an address on the affecting occasion of their assembling together. In this address he adverted to the character, zeal, perseverance, respectability, activity, and public usefulness of the deceased, and lamented the loss which the present mission had sustained, by being for ever deprived of his talents and

counsels. From the sudden and unexpected stroke which had launched into eternity one of their companions, who but yesterday had walked the deck from which he had now been plunged into the ocean, and was at this moment descending into caverns which no plummet had ever reached, he took occasion to remind them of the uncertainty of human life, and to enforce the necessity of being prepared for an unexpected summons. Having finished his address, Mr. Lynch read a funeral hymn, from the 53d page of Mr. Wesley's collection, beginning with these words,—"Hark, a voice divides the sky,—Happy are the faithful dead." He then concluded with a solemn prayer, that God would render this melancholy visitation a blessing to every soul. The whole service was awfully interesting and deeply impressive. Several were visibly affected; and all conducted themselves with the utmost propriety. But to render serious impressions lasting must be the work of God.

This solemn event took place on the 3d of May, 1814, in latitude 2 deg. 29 min. south, and in longitude 59 deg. 29 min. east from London.

The missionaries, having thus discharged the last sad rites of grateful affection to the mortal remains of Dr. Coke, were now at liberty to reflect on the peculiarity of their own situation. They were at this time nearly in the middle of the Indian Ocean, without a single known friend on board, to render them that assistance which all would want, as soon as they landed on a foreign shore, to which they were wafted by auspicious breezes. This was a subject which afforded room for much painful apprehension. Whether any provision had been made for their future support, in case such a calamity as had now happened should take place, they had no means of knowing, but by examining the papers which Dr. Coke had left; and to all of these they could not have access, until the ships reached the place of their destination. In addition to this, the passengers belonging to the Lady Melville were instantly to repair on board that ship, without the most distant prospect of conversing again with those on board the Cabalva, until they should cast anchor in Bombay. Such was the state

of suspense in which they took leave of each other, and in which they remained until the 21st of May, when they reached their destined port in safety.

On meeting together at Bombay, they were fully convinced, from searching Dr. Coke's papers, that no provision had been made for their support in case of his decease. This appeared at first to be a melancholy discovery. But God, whose overruling providence frequently makes painful dispensations subservient to his gracious designs, caused their distress to become the basis of their support. Instead of giving way to unavailing sorrow, they drew up a plain statement of their case, and presented it to Captain Birch, from whose benevolent conduct they had already received every mark of attention which dignified friendship could bestow.

Being ready to espouse their cause, Captain Birch introduced them to Thomas Money, Esq., a gentleman in Bombay, who on hearing from him a statement of their case, generously offered to advance them money on the credit of the Methodist connection. This was a favourable circumstance. They had also in their possession a letter of recommendation which Dr. Coke had procured from some friend in England, addressed to this same gentleman. On reading this letter he declared himself their friend, and would have accompanied them to the governor, if his health would have permitted.

The task of introducing them to the governor, Sir Evan Nepean, was undertaken by Captain Birch, who stated their case with the same degree of friendship which he had invariably manifested. To his excellency the governor they had several letters of recommendation from some gentlemen of the highest respectability in England. Pleased with these recommendations, and sympathizing with them in their distress, he ordered a house to be prepared for their accommodation in the fort. But on finding this to be already occupied, he generously offered them suitable accommodations about five miles in the country. Of this they gladly availed themselves, during their residence in Bombay. But on finding a ship about to sail for Ceylon, five were obliged to hold themselves in readiness for their departure.

The attention, however, which they received from his excellency the governor, from Captain Birch, and from Thomas Money, Esq., raised them to a degree of credit and respectability, far above what they could have expected among entire strangers; and perhaps, even superior to what they would have experienced if Dr. Coke had lived to conduct them without the aid of these providential friends. From Captain Birch they received 400*l.*, which Dr. Coke had lodged in his hands before they left England. This sum they deposited with Mr. Money, in Bombay, taking with them letters of credit on his agents in Ceylon, and with these the favour of several gentlemen, who appeared to compassionate their case, and to interest themselves in their welfare, and in the prosperity of the mission.

Of their arrival at Ceylon and their subsequent proceedings, detailed accounts have been given in the numerous letters they have sent to England. Many of these letters have been published in the Methodist Magazines, and they are probably in the hands of most persons who read this volume. The prospect of their success became pleasing as soon as they had entered on their labours; and, from the most recent accounts that have been received, the favourable aspect of things had not been in the least diminished. Among the heathen, several had espoused the cause of Christianity, in defiance of the dangers to which their lives were exposed, in departing from the idolatry of their ancestors. A learned priest, of high respectability and great authority, had openly acknowledged himself their friend, and become an assistant in their labours. On the hearts of many a work of grace was discoverable; and the children, who had attended the schools they had established, promised fair to make a considerable proficiency in European learning. Several English gentlemen, also, holding official situations in India, had invariably showed themselves friendly to the cause in which they were engaged, and had promised to protect them so long as they rendered themselves deserving of protection; and beyond this, favour would be a vice.

In the preceding parts of this volume, we have had several occasions to introduce the conduct of the captains

with whom Dr. Coke crossed the Atlantic. Of some of these our accounts have been favourable; but of others, the dictates of truth demanded a different statement. Both to Captain Lochner and to Captain Birch a tribute of more than common acknowledgment is due.

On board of the Lady Melville, from their first entrance into the ship, the missionaries established morning and evening prayer; and their meetings were well attended by the soldiers, particularly in the evenings; and on Sunday evening their cabin was nearly filled. This was soon known to the military and ship's officers, who, in the month of January sent them a note, intimating that, if it were agreeable, they would gladly attend their evening prayers. On their acceding to this request, their room was found too small to contain the people. The next Sunday they were requested to accept the use of the large cabin, as several other gentlemen and some ladies intended to join them in their devotions, and to attend the lecture which was to be delivered. On this occasion the captain and most of the passengers were present, but unhappily the soldiers and sailors were excluded. On the following Sunday, as one of the officers was indisposed, they were requested to stand in the steerage. This was a place in which all might be accommodated, and here they continued to preach without any interruption, until their voyage was completed.

It was Dr. Coke's intention, on being established in the Cabalva, to deliver one sermon, if not more, every Sunday. This intention he expressed early in January, and the next day, being Sunday, was appointed for his preaching. But the weather proving unfavourable, he could not stand on the deck, as he designed; and receiving no invitation afterward, he turned his attention to the soldiers and sailors, praying with them, exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come, and recommending to them the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To be thus wholly prevented from introducing the gospel among his fellow cabin-passengers, was to him a subject of painful reflection; especially as there was no apparent cause for the negative refusal of his offer. But it is not improbable that he was privately informed after some time from what source it proceeded. "I believe,"

says Dr. Coke, when speaking to Mr. Clough on the occasion, "that Captain Birch has his reasons for it." And when Dr. Coke was taken from them, the captain did not hesitate to say that "it had frequently been a matter of pain to him, to hinder so excellent and valuable a man from doing all the good in his power." "I cannot," says he, "express the regard and respect which I have entertained for Dr. Coke since I have had the honour and very great pleasure of knowing him."

But under all these circumstances, in a letter which was written not long after the six missionaries reached Bombay, when they had an opportunity of witnessing his friendly and benevolent disposition, and which bears the signatures of all, they acknowledge in terms of peculiar gratitude the obligations which he laid them under.

"We feel both duty and gratitude constrain us," they observe to their friends in England, "to inform you that, under God, the favourable reception we met with in Bombay, and our escaping the troubles which we dreaded, are principally owing to Captain Birch. During the whole of the time that our late father and friend was with him, he evidenced the utmost respect for him; and his regard for his memory was even still more so, if possible, after his death. He felt as a tender friend for us all, he even partook of our feelings, and always assured us that we had not so much to fear as he thought we dreaded. His report of us to his excellency the governor, to Mr. Money, and to many other gentlemen, before an evil report or an unfair statement of our case could circulate, prevented troubles, expenses, and afflictions, into which we must otherwise have fallen. Besides, his proposing to advance us 400*l.* raised our credit. And we are decidedly of opinion that he justly merits the warmest thanks either of the committee or the conference; as we are certain that his generous mind is above every other kind of acknowledgment."

We know not that this testimony of grateful respect has ever met, or will ever meet, the eye of Captain Birch, or any of his family; neither do we know that it will be pleasing to him to find his deeds of private

benevolence exposed to the public eye. But we must have been deceived in his character if we should hereafter find him offended, to think he has been favourable to men in distress, who have virtue enough to be grateful.

The ultimate effects of this mission to India are yet too much in their infancy, and of too much magnitude, to be anticipated. In opening the door and in preparing the way, the hand of divine Providence is discoverable. In the death of Dr. Coke we behold indeed a cloud which is too dense for any thing but the eye of faith to penetrate. Viewed as an insulated fact, it would seem to mark the divine disapprobation; but in connection with the consequences which have already followed, in some respects his loss has been more than counterbalanced. Through that event some friends have been raised up, whom the want of occasions to display their benevolence would have rendered totally unknown: among these may be reckoned several whose names have been mentioned, and many whose names have been omitted.

To this affliction may be added the death of Mrs. Ault during the voyage; but this was an event for which all were prepared long before they left England. Another, of much more considerable magnitude to the mission, has since taken place in the death of her husband Mr. Ault. He died as he had lived; and, after a short residence in India, followed the souls of his associates into a world of spirits, in calm resignation to the will of God, and with a joy that was unspeakable and full of glory.

Independently of these circumstances, the mission, from the moment of its departure to our latest account, has been followed by the smile of Heaven. And we are well assured that the same power which has removed these instruments, can raise up others, and prepare them for their work. The ultimate success of the gospel cannot depend upon the life of a single man. Mortals rise, and fluctuate, and die. Human agency is an instrument in the hands of Omnipotence; but the divine dispensations move in a far more extensive circle. In all these respects "the grass withereth, and the flower

fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

The same unsearchable wisdom which permitted the martyrdom of Stephen, called forth Saul of Tarsus to supply his place. Already has God, who removed Dr. Coke from his labour to his reward, raised up in Ceylon a priest of Budhoo, and enabled him to embrace Christianity, and we trust to feel its power in his heart. This man, from his learning, character, authority, and respectability, should he continue faithful to the grace given, will probably be, according to human calculations, of more essential service to the interests of Christianity in India, than any ten divines that Europe can produce.

CHAPTER XVII.

The author's first particular acquaintance with Dr. Coke—Compact between them—Character of Dr. Coke's commentary—Account of his Recent Occurrences of Europe—History of the West Indies—History of the Bible—Cottager's Bible—Life of Christ—Letters in reply to the Rev. Mr. Horne—Duties of a minister—Sermon on the death of Mr. Wesley—Life of Mr. Wesley—Person of Dr. Coke—Natural temper—Understanding—Learning—Talents as a preacher—Ease in company—Domestic habits—Rank among his brethren—Influence in conference—Defects—Zeal, activity, piety, usefulness, liberality—Anecdotes of his attachment to the welfare of the missions—Farewell sermon—Conclusion.

If the organs of articulation were the only medium of communicating thought, the death of all public characters would soon deprive the world of their instructions. We might indeed for a short season bear in mind the excellence of their example; and on some occasions consult our memories on what they had delivered, and thus derive advantage both from imitation and recollection. But these means would fade with the progress of time; and, when the first generation should be swept aside, little beside their names would be suffered to remain. It is not, however, in this manner that the benefactors of the human race are destined to

perish. Hence Dr. Coke still lives in his writings, and in the effects of his ministry; and from these his name would have descended to posterity, associated with an assemblage of virtues, if his biographer had been unborn.

Very early in the year 1805, the author of these pages became more particularly acquainted with Dr. Coke than he had been before. At this time his commentary on the Bible was verging toward a close, and his History of the West Indies had acquired an imbodied form. Being constantly engaged in soliciting support for the missions, and finding their claims upon his exertions to increase daily, he lodged some papers in the author's hands, requesting him to examine them with attention, to notice defects, to expunge redundances, and to give on some occasions a new feature to expression. All this was accordingly done; and in many instances his recommendations were fully adopted. This intercourse subsisted for several years, and he received from Dr. Coke a pecuniary remuneration, in proportion to the time that was expended in his service.

To what extent this assistance grew the world is not interested in knowing. The death of Dr. Coke has made the author "the sole depository of the secret," and it is his full intention at present that "it shall perish with him." Though one is a resident of time, and the other an inhabitant of eternity; though the body of one still breathes in Cornwall, and that of the other consumes in some solitary cavern beneath the Indian Ocean, the compact still remains undissolved, and will probably so remain until their spirits meet in an eternal world.

From motives to which the author will not give a name, many questions have been asked, in consequence of the preceding compact, which, in the eye of ignorance, would seem to terminate to Dr. Coke's disadvantage. In a letter which is now before the writer, this sentiment is expressed in the following words:— "What effrontery must any person be possessed of, who imposes upon the public, by publishing books or tracts in his own name, though written by another, or not ingenuously giving the honour to whom honour is

due." To this family of questions, propositions, and apostrophes, Dr. Coke, in a letter now in the author's possession, has furnished a satisfactory reply. In the year 1811, when this letter was written, he proposed to incorporate the author's name with his own; but in the title pages of works that had already appeared this could not be done. In such, however, as were then designed to be published, it is probable that this incorporation would have taken place, if a change in the mode of his proceedings had not rendered it impracticable, by the disposal of his works to the conference; and consequently by suspending the plans which he had in contemplation. Let such as charge him with "effrontery" say what, under existing circumstances, they would have expected him to do more.

But these considerations will neither give intrinsic merit to his works or deprive them of it. They must stand or fall by their independent excellences or defects. To perfect originality he makes but few pretensions in any of his publications; and "none can compass more than they intend." His commentary on the Bible, which is by far the most voluminous of all his works, is confessedly a compilation, and as such he sent it into the world, announcing on the wrapper of almost every number, that "he had only been like the bee, culling honey from every flower." Of its genuine excellence no doubt has hardly ever been expressed. It is acknowledged by a distinguished commentator of the present day, to have been primarily drawn from "the best commentary on the sacred writings that was ever published by either Catholic or Protestant." The esteem in which it was held by the Methodist conference, may be gathered from the vote of thanks which Dr. Coke twice received from that body of divines.

It may perhaps be considered among the deficiencies of this work, that the marginal readings are omitted; and among its redundancies, that it is carried to an immoderate length. It extends through six large quarto volumes, which, by increasing its expense, places it above the reach of many purchasers. The liberal terms, however, on which Dr. Coke sold his works to the conference, have enabled them to offer this com-

mentary as much below its genuine value as it is beneath its original price. It is correctly printed, and all the matter is judiciously arranged. Throughout the whole, the consistency of its character is carefully preserved; and even the exposition, inferences, and reflections, partake of more variety than might have been expected. Through all its pages there is a vigorous pulse of animated piety to be always perceived. And while it elucidates difficulties with critical annotations, it never fails to inculcate, in terms of nervous perspicuity, the necessity of experimental and practical godliness.

For the divinity of the Saviour, and the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, the whole work is a decided advocate. Its dissertations are both numerous and various; embracing, in some part or other, almost every doctrine and every precept, in which piety can claim an interest, without being perplexed with unintelligible criticisms, or bewildered in the labyrinths of metaphysics. It contains "a little library of divinity, worthy of being transmitted to posterity."

At the conclusion of this voluminous work, he published an appendix, confining his views chiefly to such prophecies as appeared to be then fulfilling on the agitated theatre of the world, or as yet remained to receive their accomplishment. This was afterward detached from the commentary, and printed in a separate volume; and as such it still remains, under the title of "The Recent Occurrences of Europe, considered in relation to such prophecies as are now fulfilling, or remain yet to be fulfilled." In this little volume a comprehensive survey is taken of passing events. It retrospects the past, it anticipates the future, and gathers from the most judicious authors such observations as serve to throw light on incidents that are involved in obscurity. To readers who are pleased to anticipate the wonderful events which may probably be expected to visit the world, before the final consummation of its history, this work must be peculiarly interesting.

In his History of the West Indies, which is now complete in three 8vo volumes, it was originally Dr. Coke's design to be chiefly indebted to Bryan Edwards, Esq.,

and his arrangements were made accordingly. But that gentleman, being a strenuous advocate for negro slavery, while Dr. Coke was its avowed enemy, placed them on ground where the liberty which the latter intended to take, might induce the former to demand something more than the acknowledgment of an obligation.

But these considerations did not operate in all their force, until the preface and some part of the first volume were printed, in which Dr. Coke has acknowledged liberties which he afterward refused to take. The persecution to which the Methodist missionaries were exposed in Jamaica from the planters, whose interests Mr. Edwards was always ready to espouse, he having large possessions in the island, compelled Dr. Coke to appeal to his majesty in council, to prevent the colonial persecuting edicts from receiving the royal sanction. Being therefore apprehensive lest those who opposed the introduction of the gospel among the slaves, might avail themselves of the liberties he had taken with Mr. Edwards' work, and seek revenge in a prosecution, he determined to expunge from his manuscript almost every quotation that had been previously inserted from his volumes. This was done, and the deficiencies were supplied from other sources.

In common with other histories, these volumes contain a general description of this vast archipelago, in its climate, soil, productions, fertility, and geographical relations. They give the character and prevailing customs which distinguished the ancient inhabitants when Columbus landed on their shores. They trace the most memorable historical events which these islands have witnessed, either from the earthquakes, tornadoes, or volcanoes of nature, or the calamities, perhaps not less terrible and destructive in their effects and consequences, which have resulted from the horrors of war. These details are interspersed with pious and moral reflections; which, though disgusting to the carnal mind, will heighten to a serious reader the entertainment they afford.

In these volumes, Dr. Coke has recorded the first dawnings of the Sun of righteousness in these insulated

regions. In each island in which any missionaries have been established, the progress of the gospel is distinctly traced; and the happy effects resulting from the institution of missions, which it was the principal business of his life to support and extend, are marked with features too strong to be either mistaken or effaced.

In the History of the Bible it was Dr. Coke's intention to include all Saurin's beautiful and elegant dissertations, which were already translated and prepared for incorporation. From this source, and from other sources, every thing necessary for the completion of that work was arranged; and little doubt can be entertained by the author, that if it had been finished, it would have been both instructive and highly interesting. It was found, however, after some numbers had been published, that the profits arising from the sale were not sufficient to justify the risk of its continuance. In consequence of this it was suspended for a season, and, from the transfer of all his literary property to the conference, was finally abandoned.

His Cottager's Bible was designed to contain nothing more than the sacred text, and some practical reflections at the end of each chapter. This work also, after all the reflections had been prepared, and many numbers published, was suspended in a manner similar to the preceding; but it has since been resumed, and finished by the Methodist book committee.

To his amendment, enlargement, and correction of the Life of Christ, an heroic poem, which he republished in the year 1809 from the original work of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, Mr. Wesley's father, the preface which is prefixed imparts all the information that can be reasonably expected on the occasion. In this preface we are informed in what state he found it, what enlargements and corrections it has undergone, and what induced him to reprint it. It is probable that this work has met with no inconsiderable sale, and that it has been favourably received with the public. Both the style and the versification have certainly received very considerable improvements. Most of the obsolete expressions are expunged, and a degree of harmony is imparted to the numbers, of which the original edition could not boast.

In the year 1810, he published six letters, addressed to the Methodist societies, in defence of the great doctrine of justification by faith, and the witness of the Spirit. Announcing that publication to the world, he makes the following observations:—"These letters were occasioned by an attack made in the year 1809, on the author and his esteemed associates in their ministerial capacity, as it respects these grand points, by the Rev. Melville Horne, minister of Christ church, Macclesfield.

"In his attack, Mr. Horne has contended that Mr. Wesley did actually renounce his primary definition of justifying faith, and that it was also abandoned by Mr. Fletcher; and finally he asserts that the direct witness of the Spirit has no foundation in the word of God. The design of these letters is to controvert Mr. Horne's position, to examine his arguments, and to point out his mistakes. And finally, to prove that neither Mr. Wesley nor Mr. Fletcher did renounce the definition of justifying faith in question; and that the doctrine of a direct witness of the Spirit, as inculcated by the Methodists, admits of a scriptural and rational defence."

His reason for thus publicly noticing Mr. Horne's publication, and the principles upon which his answer is conducted, are thus stated in the preface:—"It is possible that Mr. Horne's book may fall into the hands of some whom the specious appearance of his observations and extracts may deceive. And these extracts will be more likely to impose on the unwary, by being taken from the writings of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, and delivered in nearly their own words; while the connections, from which they have been broken, have been carefully concealed.

"To pass over in total silence conduct so justly reprehensible, would be in a measure to plead guilty to the charges exhibited. It might be construed into an acknowledgment that our doctrines were not defensible; it might encourage others to augment the number of false accusations, from a full persuasion that they should escape with impunity; and induce our enemies to triumph in the discovery of heresies which never existed but in their own imagination. On the contrary, to notice every paragraph with a distinct reply; to descend

to all the minutiæ of involuntary error, or inconsiderate misrepresentation, and trace each branch to its cause and consequence, would be to impose respect on a book which had forfeited all title to honourable regard.

"These opposite considerations have induced the author to pursue a middle path between these two extremes; so that, without implicitly submitting to either, he might derive an advantage from both, and turn his attention more immediately to the doctrines in question. By adopting this method, he is furnished with an opportunity of stating at large the real sentiments of these venerable men, who honoured him with their friendship while living, and whose memory he reveres now they are dead; and of placing before the reader some of the arguments by which those doctrines are supported, and which as Methodists we mutually embrace. In doing this, he trusts that, while he glances obliquely at the debate, and makes a few excursions in the field of controversy, he pursues a more imporant object.

"To elucidate and defend the leading doctrines of the gospel, rather than to repel the charges and insinuations of Mr. Horne, has been the author's primary motive. If, therefore, he has been successful in his efforts, as truth from its own nature is immutable, so these letters, he hopes, may be perused with advantage, when he shall be able to write no more."

With the professions made in this preface, the substance of the volume seems to be perfectly correspondent. The doctrines in question are examined in reference both to reason and Scripture; and the arguments drawn from these sources are such as Mr. Horne has not thought it prudent to attack. The objections to the doctrines are met without subterfuge or evasion; and the replies are so far specific and perspicuous, as the nature of the subject might reasonably lead us to expect. It has been reviewed in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1811, and strongly recommended to public notice. Into the hands of many it has already found its way, and has afforded satisfaction, by fairly removing some formidable difficulties with which several pious persons have been perplexed. In many of its pages the operations of divine grace on the heart are

traced with much exactness; and in pages 75–77, the identical act of faith, which unites the penitent soul to the Saviour of the world, and which seems to give a specific character to the moment in which the act of justification takes placc, is illustrated by a happy simile, of a house on fire, and its terrified inhabitants escaping from the flames.

On the duties of a minister of the gospel, Dr. Coke published four discourses in the year 1798. These were afterward reprinted in 1811, with a preface that gives a short analysis of their substance. In this it is acknowledged that he was indebted to two celebrated French authors for many of the leading thoughts with which these discourses are enriched. But from whatever source they were derived the materials are highly valuable; and we discover in the selection of them a mind not less susceptible of the importance of the ministerial office, than those of the foreign divines were to whose writings he appealed. The materials, which are intrinsically excellent, are arranged with much judgment and care, and the character is unfolded in a masterly manner. The delineations are evidently such as the Scriptures warrant; but by looking from those to some modern divines, we learn how vastly short many who are applauded fall of that primitive standard which was known in the apostolic age. Of this fact Dr. Coke was well aware; he therefore observes that "his aim has not been so much to describe what a minister of the gospel is, as what he ought to be."

In addition to the above works, Dr. Coke published several sermons and detached pieces, many of which are still in print; but some few can hardly be procured. On the Godhead of Christ, on the witness of the Spirit, and on the death of Mr. Wesley, he published three distinct sermons, each of which has its appropriate excellences. But of these, the length to which this volume is extended will not permit us to give a distinct analysis.

In these views, whether we consider the sentiments which he expressed to have originated with himself or with others, he has, by adopting them, informed the

world that they are congenial with his own. Thus, though personally dead, he still speaks in his numerous pages, and presents to the eye what his tongue can no more declare. Throughout the whole, his works discover a mind invariably intent upon extending the Redeemer's kingdom, upon warning sinners of their danger, and upon building up believers in their most holy faith.

The Life of Mr. Wesley, written and published conjointly between Dr. Coke and Mr. Henry Moore, can only in a partial manner be reckoned among his works. What part of this volume fell to his individual share the author does not pretend to know. It is not improbable, from the multiplicity of Dr. Coke's engagements at the time it was composed, that the principal part devolved on Mr. Moore; but that, on being examined, it was sanctioned by the doctor's approbation. But by whomsoever it was written, it certainly gives a fair delineation of Mr. Wesley's life and character. It is less diffusive and less comprehensive than Dr. Whitehead's: and little else could be reasonably expected, when the latter secured to himself all the documents that were necessary to give completion to the work. Nothing, however, essential to the developement of that extraordinary man's character is included in the volumes of Dr. Whitehead which is omitted in the work of Mr. Moore and Dr. Coke.

In this volume the same principles are predominant that are conspicuous in all Dr. Coke's avowed publications. From invective, acrimony, and asperity, all his pages are happily free. The truths which he inculcated are supported by reason and Scripture, without the least tincture of that severity of language which is sometimes adopted as a substitute for argumentation. This is a distinguishing feature in all his publications; and it clearly discovers the tranquillity of his mind when, secluded from the world, he pursued in his study his natural train of thought unbroken by interruption.

Dr. Coke was low in stature, and, as he advanced in age, was inclined to corpulency; but he was finely proportioned, and exhibited a pleasing figure. His skin was remarkably fair; his eyes were dark, lively, and piercing. His hair bordered on black, until his

declining years, when it became sprinkled with the hoar of age. His face was particularly handsome. A peculiar freshness, through every stage of life, distinguished his countenance, which was generally animated with an engaging smile. These, in their combined effect, gave to the whole a degree of expressive softness, that refined the masculine features, without reducing them to a state of effeminacy. His voice corresponded with his appearance. It was soft, engaging, and melodious; and, unless carried beyond its natural tone, when it became rather harsh and dissonant, it rarely failed to captivate those who heard it. To his enthusiastic admirers he seemed to want nothing but wings to become an angel.

The animation which beamed in his countenance was a striking index of his natural disposition. Warm, sanguine, and confident, he rarely hesitated in a state of indecision; and, having fixed his resolution, he was not to be deterred in the execution of his purposes by the apprehension of meeting a lion in the way. Receiving, at an early period of his life, some serious impressions, which ultimately led him to God, the energies of his mind were unremittingly exerted to promote the diffusion of vital religion, and to recommend the Saviour of the world. But his uncommon activity frequently led him to carry his schemes into effect before they were ripe for execution; and, as a natural consequence, the same sanguine disposition, which induced a promptitude of action, exposed him to the charge of indiscretion.

His understanding, though naturally good, was not to be ranked among the higher orders of human intellect. It was comprehensive, but not profound; and was better calculated to produce respect, than to excite amazement. Among common spirits, that take their stand in life near the mediocrity of human existence, it shone with a superlative degree of lustre. To these it was placed at a convenient distance, which preserved its brilliancy, without rendering it either dazzling or dull.

In early life his learning and literary acquirements were considerable; but the department in the church

which he was afterward called to fill, so far engrossed his time as to allow him no opportunity to make any proficiency in those recondite sciences which he ardently loved. To him public usefulness was of higher value than literary attainments; and he only attended to the cultivation of philology, criticism, oratory, logic, and metaphysics, so far as was necessary to qualify him for that circle in which it was his lot to move.

As a preacher, his talents were always displayed to the greatest advantage when he applied himself to the hearts of his hearers; and at this point he seemed invariably to aim. Their chief diversity consisted in unfolding, recommending, and enforcing the love of God; in displaying to advantage the necessity of a Saviour; in expatiating on the nature and importance of experimental religion; and in urging believers to make still higher attainments in the divine life. The divinity of Christ, and the direct witness of the Spirit, were topics on which he delighted much to dwell. On each of these he enlarged in strains of the most affecting animation; and in a style that, being at once declamatory, nervous, impressive, and familiar, was calculated to awaken the attention, and affect the heart. His public address, however, was too rapid for the tardy movements of sober, theological discussion. Into a detail of argument he seldom entered; but he supplied the deficiency by a copious appeal, which he generally made to Scripture authority, with which his mind was abundantly stored. Having been long convinced of the important truths of the gospel, by proofs and evidences that led to conclusions in which his mind found repose, he delivered their results without their process, in a tone of confidence which corresponded with his own convictions. This method of addressing his audience frequently operated to his own disadvantage, by exposing him to the charge of dealing in bold assertions, in the support of which he advanced no satisfactory reasons. In many instances this charge was true; but it was only true in the same proportion as he rested upon his declaration a greater weight than it was able to bear, while separated from those arguments of which it was susceptible. And it was only to those he thus appeared to disadvantage, who

beheld the conclusions broken from their premises, and who knew not how to trace the connective links which were necessary to give completion to his views.

Being a full believer in the divinity of Christ, he considered those speculative theories by which it was opposed, as efforts to undermine the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Against Arianism and Socinianism he therefore waged perpetual war; and in the warmth of his zeal, his language, on these occasions, was sometimes harsh, severe, and unguarded, and better calculated to awaken irritation, than to produce conviction. On the fashionable vices which prevailed, his expressions were also occasionally quaint and offensive; and his comparisons and modes of illustration were not always selected with sufficient care. But even with these blemishes in his public addresses, he was generally popular; and he rarely failed to collect crowded audiences among the fashionable and the gay, on whom his strictures fell with the greatest degree of severity.

But, although his language against those principles which he thought to be erroneous was, in public, delivered in terms of peculiar energy, his manners were highly polished; and in private life his address was peculiarly polite and obliging. Accustomed to behold the world in all its varied forms, he could enter any company without timidity, and find himself alike at ease, when pleading before senators for liberty to propagate the gospel in the West Indies, and when soliciting sixpence for the support of the work at the door of the humble cottager. To every one he was alike easy of access; so that the most exalted became familiar, and the most bashful grew confident in his presence, after the interchange of a few expressions.

In domestic life he was cheerful, animated, and free; and rarely failed to be communicative, unless he suspected that he was assailed with questions from improper motives. He was particularly calculated to keep alive conversation in the diversified forms which it assumed; since, from his incessant travels, his acquaintance with the world, and his knowledge of the human character, he was furnished with an ample store of

anecdotes, which were always sure to captivate, to amuse, and to instruct.

Among his brethren in the ministry his influence was considerable. On public questions that were agitated, his opinion was always sure to command respect. His expressions were graceful and animated; and while the energies of his soul beamed in his countenance, his language rarely failed to captivate, even where his arguments were insufficient to produce conviction. With public business he was well acquainted; and, in all his arrangements of affairs that were designed for popular inspection, he aimed at order in every part. To the laws of his country he was no stranger; and of the principles of the British constitution he was an invariable admirer.

In conference he was eloquent, commanding, polite, easy, comprehensive, and energetic. But he had been so long accustomed to opposition, that perseverance became necessary for him to carry his purposes into effect. This he possessed in an uncommon degree; and in most instances it never forsook him until his efforts were crowned with success. On these, and on many other occasions, he has been accused of giving way to a spirit of irritation. But this charge is only just under certain restrictions. And even where it is applicable, much allowance must be made for the trying circumstances in which he was placed, and for the multiplicity of jarring interests, which it was scarcely possible for any man to reconcile, but the claims of which it was incumbent on him to adjust. Convinced of his error, he was more ready to make an acknowledgment, and to beg pardon for his deviation from the rigid rules of decorum, than he had been to furnish an occasion for either. And the peculiar grace with which this was done, rarely failed to disarm resentment, and to procure for him the veneration and esteem of those whom he had opposed. To the propagation of genuine religion his time and talents were particularly devoted; and it was only when he conceived that the diffusion of the gospel was about to be placed under parsimonious restraints, that he manifested a high degree of culpable impatience. Profuse and improvident in expending in the cause of God his

own fortune, and the various sums he had collected from a generous public, restrictions were found necessary to produce the best and most permanent effect. These were frequently imposed by conference to check the ardour of his natural disposition, and to prevent the consequences of his instinctive precipitancy. It is in these branches of his conduct that we perceive the most reprehensible features of his character. And if from the aggregate amount we subtract his irritability—his profusion of money—his improvidence—his precipitancy, and his occasionally severe expressions in the pulpit, nothing of magnitude will remain which his scrutinizing survivors would not be proud to own.

Of his zeal and activity in spreading among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ, no evidence can be more decisive than the travels, voyages, journeys, perils, and difficulties, which his life affords. "*In labours more abundant*," is a motto that has been almost proverbially prefixed to his name since death has closed his eyes. Beside crossing the Atlantic eighteen times, and performing various other subordinate voyages, his journeys while on shore were almost without a parallel. On the American continent he travelled with the offers of salvation from "the Mississippi to the bay of Penobscot, and from the Chesapeake to the waters of Ohio."*

"For nearly thirty years," says Dr. Clarke, "the late indefatigable and regretted Dr. Thomas Coke conducted those missions (the Methodists') abroad, under the direction of the Methodist conference, and by his rare and scarcely paralleled labours, and those connected with him in that work, *many thousands* of souls have been brought to the knowledge of God who bought them. He gave his life to this work—it was his meat and his drink—and the convulsive effort that terminated his days was a missionary exertion to take the gospel to the heathens of Serendib."†

In preparing for this last mission, in which he termi-

* Mr. Marsden's notes on "Lines on the Death of Thomas Coke, LL.D.," p. 17.

† Dr. A. Clarke on the Introduction of the Gospel into Britain. p. 30.

nated his earthly career, the infirmities of age seem to have given way to the vigour of returning youth. And so intent was he upon the execution of an undertaking which he was fully assured was from God, that the dial of life, like that of Ahaz, appeared to have gone backward ten degrees. But, like Moses, although he was permitted to approach the promised land, he was not suffered to enter it; and, like the patriarchal legislator, "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

The zeal by which he was actuated was not a transient blaze, but a brilliant and unremitting flame. Its vigour, which through life played about his spirit, was neither to be subdued by difficulty nor enfeebled by age. This unconquerable activity was attributed by his enemies to ambition; by the world to enthusiasm; but by himself and his pious friends it was ascribed to the power of divine grace. From whatever cause it proceeded, it was a vigorous pulse that gave stability and permanency to the designs of his life, and that furnished him with an elevation of soul which nothing but a full persuasion of the divine favour and presence could inspire.

If this were a mistake, it was such a mistake as raised error into an exalted virtue, and placed delusion among the most noble ornaments of human nature. To speak evil of an absent person it never betrayed him. It was a powerful spring of action; and even the devious consequences which sometimes apparently resulted from it, partook of infirmity without involving moral guilt. A principle like this, by what name soever it may be called, must levy upon philosophy the tax of veneration, and exact from infidelity a tribute of respect. Following him through life, it threw a lustre even over his infirmities, and taught many to admire, who could not be induced to imitate his example.

Of his genuine piety and devotedness to God he furnished all the evidence which either reason or revelation has taught us to expect in this region of mortality. This was not an evidence arising from a momentary gust of rapture, or from the imposing glare of voluntary humility. It is to be found in all his writings—it is to be discovered in all his letters—it was to be gathered

from the spirit which enlivened all his public discourses—and it is recorded in various parts of his journals, in those incidental expressions which register his deep and uninterrupted communion with God. A constant sense of the divine favour supported him under all the trials, the dangers, and the difficulties of life; and prompted him, on almost all occasions, to recommend to others an experimental knowledge of an indwelling God. This was one of the glorious topics on which his soul delighted to dwell. Here he was always at home; and his eloquence never appeared to such advantage as when his tongue expatiated on the love of God, and Christ in us the hope of glory.

But it is not merely from the uniform tenor of what he professed to experience, nor from the correspondent spirit which breathed through his writings and his public discourses, that the evidence in favour of his genuine piety has arisen. In his outward conduct he manifested the fruits of that internal principle which influenced his heart. Through a long, a laborious, and a diversified life, it will be difficult for even malice itself to fix upon him a charge of moral turpitude, that shall at once involve the action and the motive. Experimental religion can only be known to its possessor and to God. It is only by the outward fruits resulting from it that it can be proved in the eyes of mortals to be genuine; and where these are not to be found the internal principle appears in a very suspicious light. It was the felicity of Dr. Coke to furnish evidence of both; to enjoy a sense of the divine favour in his soul, and to display the energy of this principle in the various actions of benevolence and self-denial which marked his useful and valuable life.

In behalf of his general usefulness, the numerous missions which, through the divine blessing, have been established under his auspices in various parts of the world, and the means by which they have been supported, bear a most decisive testimony. This fact is acknowledged by the voice of the British conference, in the Minutes for the year 1815, in the following words:—"From 1786, Dr. Coke had the principal direction of our missions, and to this glorious cause he entirely

yielded up all his time, strength, and talents. It has been truly stated that, for many years, 'he stooped to the very drudgery of charity, and gratuitously plead the cause of a perishing world from door to door.' Under his influence missions were established in almost every English island in the West Indies. The flame of his missionary zeal burst forth on British America. Methodist societies were also formed by him, or under his superintendence, in Nova Scotia, New-Brunswick, and the islands on the eastern coast of the American continent, and subsequently in the Bahamas and Bermuda; and to the coast of Africa also he directed his zealous efforts."

To speak of his liberality would be a superfluous task, when we have already admitted that a spirit of profusion might be reckoned among the foibles which diversify his character. To the pensioners among the poor, who had been supported by the bounty of his first wife, he continued, as already remarked, the regular stipends to the day of his death. Toward the chapels, and the dwelling houses for the foreign missionaries, he made large contributions; and expended a considerable sum in addition to what conference allowed on the outfit of that mission to Asia, in which he ended his days. And finally, the property which at his departure from England he consigned over to his executors in trust, he has bequeathed, exclusively of two legacies, to the ultimate support of that general cause in a strong attachment to which he both lived and died. This property he has given to "a certain benefit society, instituted by the conference of the people called Methodists, late in connection with the Rev. John Wesley, deceased, called 'The Itinerant Methodist Preachers' Annuity.'"

In submitting to the drudgery of charity, he suffered no opportunity to escape his notice that could furnish him with the most distant prospect of pecuniary aid for the missions. And although he occasionally met with treatment which did not correspond with the politeness of his address, yet at other times his applications were successful where his friends had anticipated nothing but repulsive insult. A singular incident of this description